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CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION

AND

EXPERIENCE.

BY

REV. WILLIAM L. GILL, A. M.,

Author of "Evolution and Progress," "Analytical Processes; or, The Primary Principle of Philosophy."

NEW YORK:

W. B. SMITH & CO.,

BOND STREET.

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1877a

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J.C.H Apr. 9, 1925

TO

READ BENEDICT, Esq.,

IN RECOGNITION OF A GENEROUS FRIENDSHIP,

AND AS

A MARK OF SINCERE AND HIGH ESTEEM,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It was one of the resolutions of President Edwards always to act according to the intuitions of his most exalted spiritual states, an eminently good, and noble resolution. It may partly have been both cause and effect of his lofty character. This resolution is the expression of an obvious duty and a pregnant principle, a principle which gives character to the following discussion. Men may also form a lofty conception of which they do not know the truth or reality; but if they do not know the contrary, it has paramount claims on their service and devotion, which are necessary and conducive to spiritual light and felicity. Obedience to the best conception is an immutable obligation and cannot issue in anything but the happiest results. This practical truth, so simple, so clear and familiar, is the staple of much that follows in this little book. But there may be some novelty and advantage in the method of its presentation.

The reader is advised that the slight narrative connected with the argument is strictly true; and it is given on the supposition that it may add a little to the interest of the discussion, and in justification of the hope that the accompanying argument may possibly be of some service to a portion of the public, whether skeptics or believers. Numerous and various are the arms which military service employs, and sometimes the humblest are the best; and not infrequently do we find the same principle exemplified in the moral warfare. Besides, a weapon must generally

be tested before its value can be determined, and the public are the only test of intellectual and moral arms.

Malebranche says that when a book is brought into the world no star presides over its nativity, and no astrologer would be bold enough to predict its future fate. In this uncertainty the author casts this little child into its ark of papyrus on the waters, watching from a distance, unseen, like the Hebrew mother, to see what will become of it. It is his sincere and earnest prayer that it may help many a soul to a firmer faith and to a more unfaltering fidelity in the service of the "great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

WM. I. GILL.

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BOOK FIRST.

THE CONCEPTION;

OR,

A SUPERNATURAL IDEAL.

Christian Conception and Experience.

BOOK FIRST.—THE CONCEPTION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—CONVERSION OF A SKEPTIC.

Some of the following arguments were substantially evolved in various discussions with a skeptical friend who was subsequently converted, and they were in some degree conducive to that result. I will therefore introduce the subject with a brief narrative. My acquaintance with this friend had its origin in his admiration of a somewhat remarkable and suspected book. This book propounded ideas which at first view seemed to him scarcely reconcilable with orthodox doctrines. It gave abundant evidence, in his estimation, of the author's philosophical mastery of the subject discussed, and of an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the arguments which militate against Theism and Christianity. Subsequently he learned that the author of this book is

not only a clergyman, but a clergyman who is thoroughly evangelical in his faith. He then reflected: "Here is a man who thoroughly understands the skeptical position, and all the difficulties which beset his own; and if he can be orthodox, why might not I, if I had his explanation?" Thus the earnest faith of the preacher, on the one hand, and the candor and hopeful intelligence of the philosopher on the other hand, staggered his belief in the probable overthrow and desuetude of Christianity, and made him suspect that mental repression and ignorance of "Modern Thought" are not necessary conditions of devout Christian faith.

It was when he was in this state of mind that I formed his acquaintance, which became quite intimate. We met frequently, and our interviews were generally occupied with discussions of some of the knotty points of philosophy or theology, especially the respective claims of Christianity and Evolution, and the difficulties attending both.

It was always a pleasure to discuss a topic with him, because in opposition to my views he always adduced genuine reasons and arguments, and nothing but these could in return produce any impression on him, while these never failed. I always considered that the degree of my success or failure in

convincing him was an index of the weakness or of the clearness and force of my arguments. It was a frequent delight to me to see how pleasantly he recognized the force of an argument which successfully assailed his own position. Yet, honest and skeptic as he was, he seemed for a while more disposed to trust John Stewart Mill and Herbert Spencer than to accept the conclusions of logic. While admitting that Spencer and Mill were in some of their main points apparently refuted, and even self-refuted, yet he thought there must be some undetected sophism in my method, and that these men could not be guilty of any such conspicuous blunders as were pointed out. Such faith, however, gradually gave way and logic asserted its rightful ascendancy in his mind even against them.

It was right in my friend to be cautious, and to suspend his judgment till he was satisfied that there was no mistake either in my premises or my reasoning; and he had a right to withhold his assent till he could examine the point more carefully, if there was anything more to learn on the subject. But the point I make is that this was not his ground of dissent to my conclusion, but that his ground was one of *faith;* and he "could not *believe*," he said, "that Spencer or Mill could be guilty" of what was

proved against them. In receiving them he had trusted his understanding, which he now distrusts, and he falls back on a faith which is confessedly groundless, and that in the face of an opposing intelligence. Through faith in Spencer, he, a philsophical skeptic, rejected or evaded an argument against Spencer!

This fault is by no means uncommon among skeptics. However honest they are, they recognize the force of an argument more readily and allow it more force in some directions than others; and while they avowedly repudiate all opinions and faiths which have not a philosophical support, yet in some directions of their own choosing they themselves cherish such opinions and faiths; and sometimes even they make themselves an authority against their own reasoning. The reader may never have read David Hume's "Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding," but he has doubtless read of his remark that "the skeptic, when he awakes from his dream, will be the first to join in the laugh against himself." We are also told that Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, printed a book against supernaturalism, and was divinely directed to do so in answer to a prayer asking the guidance of God and an expression of his will.

Mr. K., of course, retorted this accusation of inconsistency on Christians, charging it on some of them of high standing and great ability. But the inconsistency of others is no justification of our own. It is alleged of Faraday that on being interrogated in reference to some of the articles of his religious creed, he replied : " There I prostrate my reason." If he did say this, I suspect he attached a limited meaning to it. If the Bible is the Word of God we ought to submit our judgment to its decisions. To do this is not to prostrate our reason, but to obey, and so enthrone reason. To do this is the highest reason. Any other supposition is self contradictory; for it affirms that it is better to follow a fallible than an infallible judgment. In thus prostrating our reason before God, we preserve its dignity. Without any evidence to the contrary, therefore, I shall assume that it was only in this significance that Faraday confessed to the prostration of his intellect. He believed in the divine authority of the Bible, and he acted accordingly, as a philosopher should; and he believed further that he had good reasons for this faith in the Scriptures. He was therefore right and reasonable throughout. That such a man as Lewes should adduce this passage in proof that Faraday was not as honest and rational in religion as in phys-

ical science, with the implication that all the orthodox are similarly irrational, only shows that his own reason forsakes him when he touches on religion. The Scriptures never require or affirm what is self contradictory. If they did I should so far reject them, since otherwise I should have to prostrate my reason absolutely.

Nearly a year had rolled around since my first acquaintance with Mr. K———. I had seen evidences that in some respects he had made some progress. He had acquired more respect for Christianity and its teachers, and more appreciation of Christian enterprises. He was finally induced to attend a certain religious meeting, which was one of quiet power. After the meeting I spent an hour or more urging and arguing with him to make an immediate consecration of himself to Christ. Such an exhortation may seem premature, since he yet questioned the existence of a personal God. But the soul often makes enormous advances in a few hours or even moments. I was assured that his false faiths were considerably shattered and paralyzed, and that therefore the void of skepticism might be suddenly filled with the true faith.

Mr. K. grew more serious as our conversation proceeded and I thought that he began to entertain a

new hope and resolve. My last word to him that night was an exhortation to instant resolute and persistant faith in accordance with the Christian Conception. Next day, which was the Sabbath, he told me in the afternoon that, aided by a sermon which he had heard in the morning from the Rev. Dr. C———, he had complied with my exhortation, and was now trusting in Christ as his Saviour. He was afraid to say much more, but he indicated that he was dimly conscious of the dawning of a new life. In a few days this life was so full and rich in its conscious working that all doubt was dispelled, and he knew the truth of the Gospel from his own experience.

CHAPTER II.

NECESSITY OF IDEALS.

It is an interesting question, and not wholly foreign to a practical estimate of our life, how far any of us lives in an ideal world by the practice of imagining what might be or ought to be. There is a vast difference in this respect between different minds. Some have small power of thought or imagination to deviate from the forms of their own actual experiences, or even to reproduce them. Some who have a degree of power of ideal variation are so dominated by the perception of the need and advantage of attending to the real and actual, that this power finds no adequate scope for its development.

Hence it is in youth, before the stern realities and necessities of life and society have chrystalized the mind in rigid conformity with themselves, that the pleasures of reverie are generally indulged with the greatest freedom, and that the imagination is most frequently engaged in forming ideal combinations, in

creating new worlds and forms of life and new orders of experiences. Such employment as this is so fascinating, and the temptation to it is consequently so strong, that perhaps very few youths of active and fertile minds entirely escape the temptation or fail to yield in some degree to its power. Incited by what they have heard in the tales of the nursery and their earliest reading, perhaps the story of Jack the Giant Killer, the Forty Thieves, Aladin's Wonderful Lamp, the hateful old Blue Beard, and the equally wonderful and healthier stories of the Bible; and feeling troubled and perplexed in no very small degree by their own observations and experience in the real world which appears to them so strange and untractable, they have lain on the grass or sat on the fence, the door step or the curbstone, and found a quiet and intense delight in forming new economics to suit themselves, unhampered by the obtrusion of the hard unyielding forces of the real world in which they find themselves so restricted and crossed and thwarted. How much better to them appears their ideal creation than the real creation of God, and how much they wonder that God did not follow a plan somewhat like theirs!

Within certain limits the indulgence and culture of such faculty of ideal thought may be of great

value all through life. This is exemplified in many of the most gifted minds. It is seen in nearly all the writings of Plato, and in some of them it is their most conspicuous element and their most potent charm. It was at the age of thirty-six that Sir Thomas More, the most witty and eloquent man of his age, published his "Utopia." Of Bacon, the greatest Englishman of the next generation, it has been said that his imagination grew in power with his years. At the mature age of forty-nine he published his "Wisdom of the Ancients," in which learning, reason and fancy are blended together like the three primary colors of the spectrum. A good degree of this power under proper culture and discipline enlarges the resources and the scope of the intellect, while it widens and quickens our power of sympathy; and in various ways it is useful in all the complexities of life as an incitement and a guide alike to the understanding and the heart.

Our ideal of anything is our highest conception or idea of that thing, whatever it may be, whether it be a boot-jack or an empire or a world. These ideals are a logical necessity to all who think on any topic. The mechanic cannot make a tool or the simplest article of his craft without making it perfect or imperfect, according to his conception. If perfect, it

meets his ideal, and if imperfect he has an ideal above it. A mere slave and drudge who has no interest in his work and no thought or care except to execute the material task assigned him, needs and forms no ideals. He is only the instrument of other minds. But all who rise to the consideration of the proper method and aim and results of their toil, are so far artists, and have an ideal toward which and in the light of which they work.

In proportion as mental power and culture rises, this ideal action advances in definiteness and force and varied distinctness. Every statesman must have an ideal more or less full and definite of the method and ends of legislature and other functions of government. Every intelligent farmer must have some ideal toward which he works in the management of his estate. Every principal or president of a school will have some ideal of methods and ends to be practiced and pursued. All good hotel keepers and housekeepers must have an ideal of at least proximate definiteness and completeness respecting the style and management of their house.

Thus we have a practical idealism which rules all life, an ideal of effort and hope which presides over all departments of intelligent activity.

The law of intelligent action in view of ideals

operates with full force in the sphere of religion and morals, since no where is there a wider and grander scope for an ideal activity than here.

Savage and imbruted minds, which are scarcely above the dog or the ape in their intelligence, may be left out of account. Where there is no thought there can be no ideals. Where there is thought so as to form secular ideals, sacred ideals also become not only possible, but necessary. The thought of finite power and worth necessarily suggests by the law of logical correlation the thought of infinite power and worth. This, however, will be considered extremely vague, and it has never been of any great or definite force in the formation of religious ideals. It is sometimes affirmed that the infinite is a word without meaning. I consider this an error of the first magnitude both in philosophy and religion. I hold that the idea of the infinite is as definite and clear as the idea of the finite. But as this is disputed, I do not here insist upon it.

We come back to the finite. This we know to some extent. But our thought nearly always transcends our knowledge or experience; and this rising superior to the thought, to the utmost of our ability to think, is our ideal on that subject. As we can construct an ideal machine superior to any

real machine known to us, so we can construct an ideal character superior at least in some respects to any known real character, that is, any that is known to us immediately or by experience. Not only are we competent to this, but it is a necessity to us. We can no more escape it than we can escape the conception of the comparative degrees, good, better, best, of which it is an exemplification.

Any perceived limitation or defect in any character implies the conception of a superior character, which is our ideal. All known characters are known as imperfect by limitation and defect or by some positive element of evil which mars them. An ideal of superior excellence, therefore, goes with us, and presides over our contemplation and judgment of all known characters.

This ideal also may be said to always rise in a cultivated mind with the character contemplated; and it must do so to whatever height, short of infinite perfection, the character rises; and in all cases, except the infinite, the ideal will tower above the real. This ideal is therefore above all possible degrees of the finite; and what is that but infinite? Thus by another route we come to an ideal of the infinite as the necessary consequence of thinking the finite real. But still I shall not here base any

argument on this. I shall be content with the admission of the indisputable fact that we all have moral and spiritual ideals.

CHAPTER III.

OUR IDEALS A MEASURE OF OUR WORTH.

It is an obvious fact that there is a remarkable correspondence between men's ideals and their intellectual and moral rank. The ideals of Juggernaut, Kalee, Jupiter and Jesus mark the different grades of moral and spiritual elevation of their several subjects and devotees. There is no philosopher who does not claim and receive a degree of respect or homage in proportion to the acknowledged dignity of his conception of God and the universe. On this ground, as well as others, Plato is assigned the highest place among ancient philosophers. On this ground chiefly Plato himself exalts Socrates to the zenith of distinction. On this principle Mr. Spencer tries at times to show that his theory is superior to that of Christianity, which he stigmatizes as "the carpenter theory."

We find, too, that as individuals, tribes and nations rise in character they rise in their conceptions

and their ideals. This is so constant that we can with equal truth and propriety put it the other way, that their characters rise with their ideals.

There are exceptions to this in the case of those who have suddenly fallen from a previous moral elevation and come under the dominion of their appetites and passions. This is exemplified to some extent in all forms of sin and vice and crime.

But these form a peculiar class among the vicious. Conscious of their moral fall and degradation, they inwardly abhor themselves for their own wrong doing and wrong feeling. This is an element in them which always commands our respect as well as pity, and it inspires a just hope that with a change of circumstances they will recover themselves. On the other hand, the genuine and born criminal of every grade is unconscious of moral degradation and is therefore devoid of shame and self-condemnation; and till this perception and feeling are awakened there is no hope respecting him. It is the utter lack of a moral ideal which constitutes his deepest degradation.

This contains and proves our principle, that our ideals are a measure of our worth. I say a measure, for I do not mean to say they are the only measure. For when two persons who have the same ideal in the main differ greatly in their actual conformity to

it, we attribute to them a difference of worth. But this practical test transcends our subject, which seeks or affirms an ideal test of character; and the facts we have adduced show that all men recognize the existence of such a test, and that this test is expressed in the above proposition respecting our moral and spiritual ideals.

This test is as broad as human thought, and it therefore takes on as many forms as there are lines of human action and development. The artist ranks according to his power of elevated ideal creation, and it is the same with the poet. That statesman is considered the greatest who combines with the loftiest and broadest views of national polity the wisest and most feasible methods of practical approximation to the realization of those views. That teacher is also the best and wisest who combines the most exalted theory of education with the nearest approximation to its attainment. All these would be only quacks or empirics without their theory or ideal, and the relative dignity and worth of their ideal constitutes their chief relative intellectual distinction.

The question of practicality does not come in here. This is accidental to the individual, and depends on external circumstances. If I am teaching children or barbarians, my practical achievement will be small;

but my ideal of what an educated man should be would not necessarily suffer any abatement; and if my ideal is far inferior to that which you cherish, I am thereby demonstrated to be myself inferior to you. These ideals are the measure of our respective mental breadth and culture, and mental aspiration for ourselves or others.

This must hold with augmented emphasis in the realm of philosophy, where we are constructing an ideal universe, including, therefore, all possible ideals. Here, where there is scope for all highest faculties, and work enongh to tax them to the utmost, our work unerringly exhibits our weakness or our strength, and the elevation or the platitude of our conceptions and taste.

We do not forget that it is the object of philosophy to construct theories or systems which conform to fact, and not to please and delude ourselves with ideal pictures and unreal fancies. But, I ask, what guarantee, except his own judgment, has the theorist or logician that his base is not inadequate or erroneous in some particular? If his result is ignoble, may I not, therefore, come in and say, with as much logic and reason as this theorist can claim, that I cannot accept such a result, because I have an experience and a conception which it does not explain, and that,

therefore, there must be some mistake either in his premises or his reasonings from them? Further, if this theorist says, or otherwise indicates, that his theory is his ideal proper—that is, all that he desires and all that he can conceive of worth and excellence, is not this an explicit declaration of the limit and highest altitude of his mind? If, then, this theory or ideal of this man is low and vulgar compared with the ideals or theories of some other men, are not his mind and character low and vulgar compared with theirs? On this ground, I claim the right to reject and scorn, detest and antagonize with unutterable vehemence, a theory of mere material sensism. Whether this theory be true to fact or not, I should feel it a mental and moral degradation to accept it as my ideal, and therefore I am right in saying I will not. I am, therefore, right in denouncing the universe as wrong, if this base theory is true; and so its advocate himself is wrong in that case, in being contentedly true to fact.

I think, moreover, that the very existence of my ideal theory, as so superior in character to this asserted true theory, disproves the truth of the latter. I hold that it is an absurdity, amounting to a self-contradiction, to suppose that I, a mere infinitesimal fragment, who do not comprehend myself, and but

little or aught of anything around me, should be able to be a judge of the universe, and condemn it, and, rising high above it, look down with supremest contempt upon its grand totality !

But this I do, if the atheistic sensist theory is correct. It is true, I know, that the less may despise the greater, through incomprehension. But this theory, and such abominations as I am execrating, I comprehend perfectly, and I hate them as much. If it were the true theory of the universe, I should then, with full comprehension,- detest and despise the whole totality of the universal force and cause of all things, myself included, as ineffably beneath myself. But that is impossible and absurd. Yet I do thus judge, and feel rightly and knowingly toward this theory ; therefore, that theory does not represent the universe. It is a base-born misrepresentation, more detestable than any ordinary falsehood, because it is alike in its intrinsic nature and origin and consequence of a viler quality.

It is a self-contradiction to suppose that I can rise above the forces to which I owe my existence, and all that I am. As nothing but a force can do anything, and as nature is one force, constant and immutable through all change, as witnessed by the law of the conservation of energy, therefore this force must at all

times be at least equal to all conscious existence and unconscious operations. Our Author and the force which dominates our souls cannot be sensible matter which is inferior to thought and volition. Our Author is a power which is behind the material universe, and works constantly in it and through it.

CHAPTER IV.

CULTURE OF IDEALS.

We have seen that as an ideal is that which expresses the highest conceptions, hopes and aspirations of its subject, so the relative dignity of ideals, other things being equal, proves the relative worth and dignity of their subjects.

This is a great point gained. It is a point which all who possess any moral and spiritual intuition can understand and appreciate in some degree; and, with the ideal of Jesus before them and within them, they look down from a very lofty height on materialism; and up there they are quite safe from all attacks of materialistic argument. What we heartily detest and despise will be powerless to convince us, whatever its pretense of logic. In the exalted state and position above conceived nothing will appear so logical as the inference that the loftier ideal is the shadow cast by an equally lofty real.

In proceeding I call attention to an obvious fact of very great importance, that there is a perpetual interaction between our ideals and our intellectual and moral character, so that they are forever modifying each other. An exalted ideal attained and preserved naturally operates as a celestial magnet to elevate the character; and, on the other hand, any progress of the latter always advances the former. The culture of the real and the culture of the ideal, therefore, always go together. This is not a known fact only, but also a psychological and moral necessity. We may possibly advance in the moral ideal without advancing in the real, because we may wilfully refuse, or through temptation and weakness fail, to conform to an acknowledged obligation. But we cannot advance in the moral real without making some progress either in the distinctness or the conscious value and force or the elevation of the moral ideal.

Hence the obligation to cultivate the highest ideals, and especially the moral and spiritual ideal, as a means of cultivating the moral and spiritual real. This cultivation should be earnest, deliberate and constant. Of course, this is nothing new, but only that which we have heard from the beginning; and its age and familiarity constitute a part of its credentials, for if it were new it could not be true. Its

originality consists only in the connection in which it is used and in the end for which it is employed.

The obligation and advantage of cultivating ideals in all departments of human action are universally acknowledged and acted on. This is not only true of the votaries of art. It is equally true of the cultivators of science and philosophy, and it is true in all intelligent prosecution of the material and social tasks of life. With every advance in achievement, there will be an advance of the ideal which will promote another advance in the real.

In this eager effort after ideal plans and then after their realization, a plurality of ideals in their practical action will often come into competition, when the inferior will be replaced by the superior so far as their relative merits are recognized.

In practical life it is, of course, the practical results which control the preferences. But in works of pure art there is no such ground of preference. Here the most perfect art will always carry off the palm; and where there is any symbolism the loftiest, the purest and the most perfect ideal representation will always by the best judges be preferred, as a matter of course.

While philosophy always has an ideal, yet unlike art, that ideal is not sought alone, nor is it valued generally by itself alone, nor is a philosophical theory

always conceived of in the light of an ideal. Conformity to facts, and the practical results may occupy our attention, and by these wholly or chiefly the theory may be judged. This is all right. No theory is worth anything which cannot stand these tests. But we may at our option leave these out of account for a while, and contemplate the philosophical theory as an ideal, intellectual and moral.

In doing this, we are guilty of nothing that is wildly fanciful or unphilosophical. Philosophy is pursued for its intellectual satisfactions, and, therefore, on the assumption or in the hope that every step of progress will be a pleasure, approximating perfection as we suppose ourselves approximating a perfect philosophy, so that the pleasure and the philosophy will culminate together. Hence, from the very nature of the thing, all theories of the universe are philosophical ideals. They are advanced and maintained because they satisfy the minds of their originators and advocates; and if conceived and held as perfect theories, they are perfect ideals. Therefore, it is just and lawful, at our option, to contemplate them in this light exclusively, and in this sole light to test their value.

As this resolution of philosophical theories into philosophical ideals is based on the assertion that

philosophy seeks and expects satisfaction as the result of its discoveries, there may in some minds be a a slight hesitancy in yielding to it, on the ground of a prevalent opinion of no great authority and less wit. Lessing has said that truth and error being both offered to him, he would prefer error, that he might have the pleasure of seeking the truth. This, with other such dreams, has given rise to the sentiment, which has become quite sentimental, that the pursuit of truth is better than its acquisition. All this expresses the feeling only of those who never valued truth, and never sought it as the pearl of great price. We seek only what we want to get, because of its estimated worth or value.

To speak of seeking what we value less than the search itself is absurd, for such activity is not a search at all, but an amusement, or a process of mental gymnastics. Besides, to belittle truth in this style is profane. It confounds and grinds all philosophy, all religion and all art, and the entire system of things into insignificance, for these constitute "the truth of things;" and truth is nothing of any great importance, of less importance than a chaos of aimless activities, as blind and as indifferent respecting their ultimate end as the atoms of Lucretius. A more shallow, baseless and suicidal notion

never floated in the atmosphere of Bedlam. I feel a warm and inspiring excitement in the pursuit of truth, but only because I value the truth, and hope to acquire it, though in fragments, step by step, in an eternal progress, enriched by every acquisition, and, at the same time, incited to fresh pursuit by the hope of further progress.

Philosophy is the love of wisdom, not the love of a search which has no coveted prize in view. This wisdom, acquired, is a pleasure; and if we have acquired such wisdom as to be able, in outline, to give a theory of the universe, it constitutes our ideal of the universe as expressing our conceptions of it, and so giving to us entire intellectual satisfaction. We are, therefore, logically and philosophically, entitled to treat all such theories as ideals.

Thus contemplated and treated, the loftier, the broader and grander theories or ideals are to be preferred, and they will be by those who can conceive them. The inferior mind will be satisfied with the inferior theory or ideal, while the better or superior mind will demand and choose the superior theory or ideal. An ignoble theory is, therefore, a condemnation to him who holds it, for he likes it, and so is like it.

Here skepticism interpolates the inquiry: "But,

suppose he is compelled to accept it by the evidence which is presented to him, and that he accepts it on account of its evidence, and not on account of its agreeableness to him, or its congeniality with his predilections? Is he not bound to accept the evidence and the theory which it supports?" "Yes," I answer, "in such a case he must accept, but who or what is the guarantee that his theory is the product of evidence pure and simple, and entirely irrespective of his own disposition and mental inclination? There is none. The fact is, we can never surmount ourselves, nor leave ourselves entirely out of account. Our own state and inclinations are always a powerful though subtle factor in the evidence in all such cases. Hence, different men will read the same objective evidence quite differently; and on this account only, or chiefly, they attain different theories or ideals of the universe.

Now, if it were the objective evidence purely which determined the theory of the materialist, and if it were a theory only, and not an ideal, he would be dissatisfied with it. He would accept it only as a bankrupt accepts his misfortune. He would not be its ardent propagandist as if it were a panacea, and he the fortunate quack who had just discovered it, proud of his great discovery, and expecting emolu-

ment and renown as his appropriate reward. Instead of that he would shut it up in his desk or dryly communicate it to his friends as "a most lame and impotent conclusion," as something which comes far short of his ideal. But in this case he would question the truth of such theory, and the fullness or the relative force of the evidence. He would be likely to proceed to say, "it cannot be true. It is not a satisfactory explanation of things. According to my view, it contradicts instead of explaining some of the phenomena of my own consciousness, and utterly fails to meet either the intellectual or moral demands of my nature;" and his loftier ideal inevitably becomes his theory. If the lower theory satisfies his mind and heart, it is his ideal; and he will boast of it, propagate it and glory in it, and in so doing he puts himself on the low level of his theory. On the other hand, if it does not thus give him satisfaction, he will have no interest in it, cannot rest in it, cannot positively accept it as the true theory; and thus it must give way to the higher conception or ideal as his working hypothesis or theory. This is the process which reveals the true art and spirit of philosophy, and which will command the highest suffrages of the philosophical guild through all the ages.

Up toward this style and spirit the true thinker

inevitably works. The highest law of our existence enjoins us to work up perpetually toward the highest ideals of beauty, truth and goodness; and whoever is content with the inferior and the imperfect may excite our pity, but can never command our homage or our approval, unless we belong to the same low class with himself.

CHAPTER V.

INFLUENCE OF IDEALS.

No one needs any evidence that ideals are not wholly uninfluential; and it is very obvious to all that they sometimes wield a very great power. Yet at other times their influence seems to be quite small, and at still other times it seems to vanish entirely. We ought to determine the law of this variation, and so acquire a new principle of practical importance. This I think can be done, and the principle then can be applied in the development of my argument.

The first principle is that all ideals which involve the ideal of action, as all ideals of the universe and of life and its issues do, are influential in proportion as they are agreeable or satisfactory throughout. So far as there is anything disagreeable in the ideal it will operate against its attempted realization, and in that proportion it will fail to be practically influential.

It is hence that Christianity often practically fails

with bad men, because it contains elements which they dislike. Everlasting honor and happiness charm them, but holiness repells them. And as they must repent of sin and forsake it, and be transformed into the holy image of God in order to the attainment of the Christian ideal, they approve the better, and the worse pursue, because they are more under the dominion of their depraved inclinations than of their better moral judgments. It is thus only partially their ideal.

A second principle is, that, other things being equal, the loftier and nobler the ideal the better and nobler will be its influence. This is the law of their operation. This hardly needs any elucidation. While true genius is an original fountain of power, it grows by cultivation, and the best products of human genius are the best means of its culture. A writer's style is affected by the style which he is most in the habit of reading. Bad models in oratory, poetry and painting have always been an irreparable damage to their imitators and admirers. On the other hand, the most consummate genius in art has been developed only by the study of the best models.

It is also characteristic of a genius unexhausted and progressive, or capable of further development, that it always has an ideal, either of its own creation

or in the works of other men, which is above its actual attainment, and toward which it never ceases to work. Common men, men devoid of genius, may attain their ideal, and be satisfied ; and, as a consequence, they are as stationary, but not as sublime, as Oriental monuments. It is significantly related of a distinguished painter that, in his later years, he sat down and wept, as he finished a picture, because it fulfilled his ideal—since he considered this fact a proof of the decadence of his intellect.

Moral and religious ideals must also be effective for good or evil, according to their character. This will not be questioned, and it needs no proof. But it may need elucidation, that we may be understood.

This moral and religious ideal is not to be considered as identical with intellectual power and development. Vast intelligence is compatible with exceedingly low moral conceptions. The moral ideal may remain stationary, while our ideals and achievements in every other direction are advancing. On the other hand, moral culture, with little or no intellectual or æsthetic culture, is possible, and by no means without example. We cannot, therefore, be justified in confounding these two elements ; and we are forbidden to ascribe all moral progress to the progress of knowledge as its necessary effect. The acknowl-

edged superiority of Europe to Cathay, and of modern to ancient times, does not consist in knowledge only, or in the progress of science only, which, it is alleged, has improved both morals and religion, as well as social usages. The Greeks were intellectually superior to the Asiatics before the Christian era, while there is no evidence of their superior virtue. The evidence is all on the other side. The moral practices of the Greeks, and also of the Romans, after they became great and rich, were ineffably infamous, and their principles were little better, as taught by their greatest masters, and practiced by their best characters, while in their earlier and less cultured history their manners were more pure. It is a familiar fact that the greatest minds may be wicked, and the smallest may be pure and virtuous. Never was anything more blind than the notion that the progress of intelligence secures the progress of virtue. It has often been just the reverse, as it was among the Corinthians and the Athenians, as well as the Romans, in the most conspicuous periods of their history. It was so with the Italians in the fifteenth century and the early part of the sixteenth.

Where moral principles are firmly held, and there is a disposition to conform to them, the progress of knowledge will guide in their application, and lead

to ever wiser and higher applications; and it is here that knowledge promotes virtue; and yet it is not virtue that it here advances properly, but only the methods of its exercise. It is thus that the progress of knowledge has been of vast advantage to society by widening and elevating our conceptions of the application of moral principles. But the progress of knowledge (secular) has no necessary tendency to make men embrace moral principles and conform to them. It very often and very extensively operates the other way by generating pride, and by revealing the worldly advantages of wrong and the methods of their attainment by wicked courses; and hence this has always been made a point of caution and admonition with the wisest of moralists.

To the "Influence of Ideals" must be ascribed, in pre-eminent degree, the unapproachably mighty power which the Bible has wielded, and is growingly wielding, in the moral uplifting of the world. "The first and great commandment," together with "the second, which is like unto it," enunciated by Moses, that "thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," is the unchanging Biblical Ideal. It always shines clear and unapproachably above us, or most of us; but it is nevertheless a boundless in-

spiration, and the mightiest of all attractions and incitements in every good direction. This is a joy forever, as a thing of supremest beauty, and it is, at the same time, the Christian Endymion's transporting vision which incites him to the most heroic and never-ceasing endeavor and pursuit, in the hope that he may yet embrace and possess it for evermore.

CHAPTER VI.

TRUTH AND AUTHORITY OF IDEALS.

THE vast and evident influence of ideals confers upon them a corresponding authority, and this authority rises or falls with their relative worth and dignity; and the highest ideal has always the highest authority. This authority is a claim not only on our acceptance, but also on our practical allegiance and obedience.

In works of art there are different grades of dignity, all of which are legitimate; while yet inferior minds will prosecute the inferior lines of art and superior minds the superior lines of art.

In theories which involve the moral and religious elements of character there is no such admissible distinction between the high and the low. Each theory is exclusive of all others, and is to be accepted to the rejection of all others, or it is to be rejected on the score of not being as good as some others.

For all ideals are invested with an intrin-

sic and indefeasible authority. They are not regarded as ideals except when considered as the proper objects of effort and hope, and as having a right to command our action and obedience as well as our admiration. Our ideal is our king, and, it is its prerogative to rule our life, and it always commands us to strive to be like itself; and consequently it holds an authority and a power to condemn and chastise where its authority is disregarded. This is conspicuously recognized in the fine arts; and if the conception of an ideal is less prominent elsewhere, it is still true that wherever the conception is entertained it has a dominating influence in all directions. For instance, no one will admit that a man is a statesman unless he has some proper ideal of society, and works steadily toward it with energy and practical wisdom. It is not enough to have an image or a conception which is called an ideal; but it must be the object toward which all his thought and efforts are directed; because only as it is thus pursued, as Endymion pursued his transporting vision, is it truly treated as an ideal.

The ideal gives the law to conscience, or rather, it constitutes the law of conscience. To suppose we can disregard it with self-justification is self-contradictory. In pronouncing it to be our ideal, we pro-

nounce it to be our highest law, because the highest end and object of hope and effort. To deny its authority is to say that the best and conformity to the best is no better than the inferior and conformity to the inferior. Our moral and religious ideal has, therefore, the right of supreme and absolute domination. Nothing can ever be brought into competition with it or be allowed to question or divide or in any wise diminish its authority.

At the very least the highest ideal must be made the paramount working hypothesis of all men, because, whether proved or not, it is necessarily the most beneficent agency that can be employed or conceived, and its effects must be correspondent to its nature.

But are we not entitled, if not required, to go farther than this? We have seen that our highest ideal is our highest law of action, else it is not an ideal, and only so far as we endeavor to conform to it is it treated as an ideal. Now, suppose we had an absolutely perfect ideal, and that this ideal is presented in the Scripture, this would then be our supreme law of duty. This ideal can never be positively disproved, as we cannot comprehend infinity, and so can never prove that there is not an infinitely perfect being, and that the known universe is not con-

structed on the best possible plan. Hence there is nothing to stand in the way of its being our supreme law, and it must claim imperial and absolute dominion.

Thus obeyed, it must necessarily prove a beneficent agency of the most exalted kind.

But if, after all, it should not be true, then in the highest possible result and form of life error would be the supreme authority and end, and error, ignorance and falsehood would be better than truth, knowledge and veracity. But this contradicts the very conception and nature of knowledge and veracity and their opposites, and it contradicts the ideal itself which includes all mental and moral power and excellence; and it thus contradicts and refutes itself. It also, consequently, contradicts all science and philosophy, which assume that knowledge is desirable, and noble, and one of the chief ends of our existence, and one of the prime elements of our felicity and glory.

It is possible that supposing the truth of all things were attained it might not give satisfaction, might not be, or be deemed, the good in the highest conceivable sense; and from this it follows that it is also possible that the supreme idea of the good is not true to fact. This cannot be disputed, and here our

argument partially fails. It is not a logical demonstration. Yet it has a very high degree of probability, because it appeals to the principle on which, nevertheless, all science and philosophy proceed that the true is the good, and as such they seek it, else they would not seek it at all. Besides this, it has a just and moral claim on our practical acceptance and action as a "working hypothesis;" and he who is recreant to its claims is morally and philosophically at fault; and he is also inconsistent, for he acts on his highest ideal in all or most other connections and acknowledges the obligation as a universal principal. Therefore, to disregard it here in relation to the highest conceivable ideal and end is a flagrant impropriety and immorality.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCEPTION OF THEISM AND EVOLUTION.

If it is agreed that our ideals reflect ourselves, that by the first law of our existence we are bound to improve them to the utmost, and that in a comparison of ideals the superior is always to be preferred. It would be in order here to compare several philosophical theories, to see which, on these principles, is to be preferred. But I am not here seeking a philosophical theory so much as a religious one, which, of course, ought to be philosophical. On this, as well as on many other grounds, the Bible is my theory and ideal. I propose to compare this, not with all opposing theories, but with the best that the human mind has ever attained without revelation or in opposition to revelation. If Christian Theism is better than the best of these, it is better than all the rest, and so they need not be noticed. Acknowledged atheism, pure and simple, can admit of no comparison on the question. Whoever is sat-

isfied with this theory so as to adopt it as his ideal of the universe, whatever its alleged grounds, is essentially and deliberately base and beastly, and I should consider that every house and family ought to be closed against his presence and influence, or admit him only as the diseased victims of vice are admitted into a hospital.

There are, indeed, atheists, or those who are doubtful in regard to Theism, who are neither exceptionally base nor vicious. They are better than their creed. They have been fortunate, in some respects, in their birth and training. They are agreeable associates and trusty friends, of good manners and respectable morals. They see that atheism is intrinsically base and debasing. They assent to it as probably the truth only, because, as they suppose, they are compelled by the force of evidence. But they are glad that others do not see as they do, and that to others Theism and its moral incitements and restraints are possible, and appear logically necessary. They will therefore favor religion, though they believe it not. Their atheism or skepticism is unwelcome, and Theism is virtually their ideal. These are not the leprous and plaugue-smitten characters of which I have spoken as so ineffably repulsive and abhorrent, who are satisfied with their atheism, and

make it their supreme ideal. Both are injurious; but the refinement of the former may be a benefit, while the latter are unmitigably and grossly evil, and defile at a distance as well as by a touch.

There is an indefinite variety of theories which include the affirmation of the existence of God. These may be divided into two classes, those which consider God as a personal being and a real Creator, and those which consider God as an impersonality who unfolds himself in the processes of the so-called created universe, and who thus constitutes the totality of the universe. The former is Theism proper, and its advocates are Theists. The advocates of the latter theory are variously designated as Deists, Pantheists, Evolutionists. Some who have gone under the name of Deists have perhaps been Theists, and some Deists may have been classed as Theists, because the classification here made has not been heretofore adopted.

These two classes are respectively naturalists and supernaturalists. Theism affirms a supernatural creationism, that the thing created is not God nor ever was, so that it is not unfolded from Himself, but simply caused to be because He wills it; that the creature or creation is frequently operated by the same supernatural agency, and that thus the

Bible has been given to us (at least in part), and its miracles performed. Deism proper, including evolution and pantheism, and any other non-theistic system which affirms a God, is in every particular the opposite of all this. It affirms that properly there has been no creation, and no deviation from the strict and necessary operation of natural force from all eternity. There are some, indeed, who have rowed in two boats, admitting (verbally at least) a creation, but denying all subsequent supernaturalism, while others, affirming that the universe is an evolution from Deity, have denied the supernaturalism of creation proper, and have yet admitted subsequent supernatural interpositions. (This latter is the metaphysical position of many professed Christians, among whom Sir Wm. Hamilton is conspicuous). This is not Chaistianity ; it is in vital antagonism to Christianity ; but as these writers are not aware of it, and as they would no doubt have modified their metaphysics had they known it, we shall rank them according to their creed and not according to their philosophy. They have thought that their conception of creation, so-called, an evolution from Deity, is the only possible one, and that this therefore must be the proper Scripture doctrine, as, of course, it must be, if no other idea is possible.

It is certain that in no age or country in the world has any other idea been attained by philosophy. The learning of Hamilton assures us of this. It requires, indeed, no very learned investigation into the history of philosophical opinions, to convince us that all philosophies of all ages and climes, are but different species or varieties of pure naturalistic evolution—not, indeed, always self-consistent, as error never can be for a great while together, yet consistent in repeatedly returning to this idea that the universe is not an absolute creation, that in some way or other it had an eternal existence in God, and is only evolved from Him, and is He in a state of evolution, and that He thus includes in Himself the whole sum of being, which never, in any degree, can receive any addition or diminution, and that all possible changes are but the eternal evolution of the eternal one. Here all philosophers of India, Egypt, Assyria, Greece and modern times agree; and if any Christian philosopher has haggled at this, and affirmed supernatural interposition, he has spoiled it all by showing us a pantheistic creation—an evolution only in which God and the universe are identified.

When we come to the Scriptures, leaving our philosophical theories out of sight for a while, and

proceed to expound them in accordance with the usual laws of exegesis, we find a different idea. We find that God and the world are always spoken of as absolutely dual, that God is described as a person who existed "before the world was," that the world began to be at His volition, that it is still upheld by the word of His power, that man is a responsible being, who can act contrary alike to nature and to his Maker's will. From Genesis to Revelations the Bible is uniformly expounded among the orthodox in accordance with this doctrine of absolute creation. Yet, such is the littleness of our nature, that having thus expounded the Scriptures, or accepted such interpretation, we turn to philosophy, and with perfect naiveté subscribe to a system of evolution. We see and understand the Scripture idea when we look at it; but we become blind and self-oblivious when we turn to philosophy. It is clear that from the beginning until now, the Bible has been immeasurably in advance of philosophy, clear and definite in the assertion of a doctrine which philosophy cannot yet understand, but which is perfectly clear to the commonest mind as he reads the Scriptures.

We are now, however, able to give a philosophical statement and defence of the Bible Doctrine, and thus make it a consistent Ideal.

"It will be agreed that the Infinite is the greatest possible Being, because, if it could be greater, it would be finite, and so to deny this is self-contradictory. The infinite must also include self-conscious personality, because this is more than unconsciousness and impersonality ; and, therefore, it must include a personality of the highest and greatest possible attributes, if there is such a Being. Power added to being is greater than being only. The power to increase power or being at will is greater than the absence of such power, for not to be able to do it is a limitation of power. Infinite Being must, therefore, include a self-conscious personality that possesses a limitless power of absolute creation, else it is not infinite. It follows that infinity cannot include all real and possible being, for in that case it cannot create, or its creation is only self-enlargement, either of which would prove it finite. The infinite, therefore, does not necessarily include all being, but only a being of limitless power and excellence, who creates a finite, and who can create or annihilate at will."

CHAPTER VIII.

SUPERIORITY OF THE THEISTIC CONCEPTION.

EVOLUTION gives us a mighty eternal force, but whether that force is conscious and purposeful is a subject of debate even among evolutionists themselves. By necessity of nature, and without any volition except one which is itself necessitated, and is thus only a necessary antecedent and subsequent in an eternal claim or succession, this power, in the succession of ages, evolves the worlds and their phenomena as modes of itself or himself. But whether he knows and fore-knows, or wills or not, he cannot make one hair white or black, otherwise than as it turns out to be. He is unable, in any particular, to modify the course of nature, for good or evil, of any sentient being, so that he is neither to be feared, loved, nor revered, neither deprecated nor implored. He can never give us any sign of his sympathy, if he have any; and whether we adore him or deny him, and spit upon his name, it will be

all the same to us, provided we observe such of nature's laws as can be made to work for our interest. As our conscious individuality began with our organization, with that it will end, unless, in accordance with the Pythagorean and Hindoo view of the doctrine of evolution, we may have a number of metempsychoses; but even then we shall inevitably sink at last into the silent and unconscious nirvana. Here the fruit of our life also ends, so far as it concerns ourselves. There is no proper scope for the operation of moral law, because, if the criminal can stave off the penalty of his crimes till death, he escapes entirely. If he is fortunate in his circumstances, hard of heart and conscience, he can, through a long career of cruelty, enjoy a degree of sensual and malignant and triumphant pleasure, and then pass away without a pang, and even while in the enjoyment of a fiendish gratification over the misery of some fresh victim of his power and malice. But this is right according to the theory, for this favored incarnate fiend is not to blame. He has acted only from absolute necessity, according to his nature and circumstances, which is true of all other sentient beings, and there is no special merit or demerit belonging to one man above another, or to men above the beasts and creeping things ; and, there-

fore, it is very proper that they meet only the good or the evil that comes to them here naturally and necessarily. Whatever is good and strong and sublime in character that now comes from the consideration of an immortal existence, and from moral laws which have an unending sweep in their operation and influence—all this on this scheme is lost, nay, except in a very modified meaning, the very conception of moral obligation passes away, and nothing remains but a conscious motion toward pleasure and away from pain, just as the metal or other object turns to or from the positive or negative pole of the magnet.

The Theism of the Bible presents us with a Personality of infinite perfection, distinct from the universe, its Creator and upholder, who sees the end from the beginning, and purposes and secures certain processes or laws, and certain results of all action; who has created man with a peculiar power of conception and volition, which is called moral, in virtue of which he can free himself for a season, and to a certain extent, from nature's inexorable chain of sequences, and thus exercise the sublime prerogative of choosing his own moral destiny. It affirms that man has once chosen wrong and destroyed himself, but that God pities him as a father

pities his children, that he gives us his Spirit to incite us to all holy endeavors, and empower us to live a pure and holy life on earth; that he pities our weakness, forgives our sins and failings if we are penitent, sympathizes with us in our trials, is graciously accessible to our prayers; that while we are here all things shall, in some way or other, conspire for our welfare; that if some of these things are very painful and afflictive now, they shall, if rightly borne, be productive of a proportionate felicity hereafter; that every volition and exercise of goodness, whether it bears immediate fruit or not, or is recognized or not in this world, shall work in its subject forevermore a moral power and elevation, and happiness corresponding with its relative moral worth; that to the wicked the same moral law operates in an inverse direction and result, and that they can escape the eternal consequence only by repentance and reformation, henceforth living as his servants.

I think no one who compares these two theories honestly, will be at a loss to determine which is the nobler, and which, as an ideal, is to be preferred. The difference between the two I cannot characterize, because it is too great, and the advantage in every particular is on the side of our Theism. In such a comparison Evolution, of whatever stripe of

pure naturalism, loses all lustre, and becomes not only insignificant, but contemptible, while Theism appears adorned with the glory of heaven and the sublimity of eternity.

CHAPTER IX.

JESUS.

THE incomparable superiority of the Theistic conception is exemplified in Jesus. In Jesus of Nazareth we have a character which is the alleged embodiment of Theism; and this character towers so far above all others in the whole range of history, as to exclude all question or comparison. In the amazing breadth of his views and sympathies, in the elevation and purity of his moral conceptions, in his tenderness and pity for human weakness or woes, in the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of his moral purposes and ultimate ends, in his limitless, pure and unconventional benevolence, in his sublime hopefulness, amounting to absolute assurance of the ultimate triumph of the good and the eternal blessedness and glory of the righteous, and in the grand incitement which he supplies and infuses into his disciples to live and labor in view of this, and in the belief that each can be of some real service in pr·

moting it—in all these, and many more points of equally great significance, he is a most marvelous moral phenomenon. All else that is great and wonderful in human personality, dwindles into insignificance in comparison with him. While I write I feel most profoundly the relative insignificance and impotence of this attempt in a few words to depict him. His character, as given in brief simple narratives by four unlearned and bigoted Jews nearly two thousand years ago, is far above all power of description that I possess. It is immeasurably above me. I fall in homage before it, and all the world has done the same. Jesus is the king of men, and commands the most royal homage of all hearts. From peasant to prince and from clown to philosopher, all ranks and all lands haste to make willing obeisance before him.

In this brief description I have conceived him only as a man, and have made no reference to the claim which his disciples have made for him as a miracle worker, and as the sacrificial Lamb which takes away the sin of the world.

But in estimating the greatness of his character, justice demands that we take note of the kind and degree of influence which he has wielded and still wields increasingly in the world. This influence is

distinctively moral, and is therefore absolutely free and unforced, and it continually increases as both cause and consequence of the growth of freedom and intelligence and moral conception among men; and every individual man pays to Jesus a higher moral homage in proportion as his own power of moral conception rises.

One of the most sublime and striking characteristic features in the life of Jesus is the quiet and perfectly unostentatious assumption and ineffaceable impression which he makes of being at once immeasurably above all the world and its forces of every grade and form, while yet subject to certain of its laws, and in full and keen sympathy with every heart-pulse of all its throbbing millions; so that every tried and troubled soul, not impenitent or morally rebellious, when contemplating his teachings and character, feels in him the comfort of a wondrous and exquisite friendship. Explain it as we may, such is the fact. There is nothing like this, nothing to approximate it or compare with it in the whole world. It utterly eclipses all other examples of exalted personal moral influence. The story of his life has acted for good like a celestial magic on the moral history of uncounted myriads; and the purest, the sublimest and the most beauti-

ful characters that have shone on the page of history from his day to this, have in grateful homage ascribed their distinguishing excellencies to the influence of the life and death of Jesus. As depicted by two philosophers, one of them of unequalled eloquence and philosophical genius, Socrates appears truly great; but to compare his moral glory and influence with those of Jesus as depicted by four uncultured Jews, and reflected from the entire plane of European history since his death, is simply and ineffably puerile. Jesus stands alone, and of the people there are none with him.

It may be said that his influence is very largely owing to an impression which has so widely prevailed, and which still prevails, that he possesses a divine dignity and power, so that the minds of such believers are necessarily prostrated before him, and they imagine that he sees them now, and now has a sympathy with them, and communicates to them certain benefits, the belief of which inspires and animates, and so strengthens and helps them. This is no doubt true; but all its logical force is in favor of Theism, not against it, as we shall soon see. I shall make no inquiry into the origin of this prevalent impression with a design to infer that this impression must have a foundation in fact. I will simply call

attention to the fact of this impression and its effect as a phenomenon which demands an explanation, and necessitates certain logical conclusions.

The very least and lowest of these conclusions is that this impression must have a cause in the character to which such an awful exaltation is ascribed. It cannot have any other origin, because there is nothing significant in his outward condition except such as was imparted to it by his character. I do not mean to imtimate that this is any proof of his divinity, but only of his unparalleled greatness and moral majesty, a greatness so vast and a moral glory so elevated that many of the greatest minds and finest natures in the world have united to worship him as the supreme God, " the Maker and Upholder of all ; " so that He is literally the perfect personation of Theism.

Further, while we make no affirmation concerning the truth or the error of this conception and belief, yet there is here forced on our attention the patent historic fact that a genuine faith in Jesus as the Friend of the needy, either as the absolute God or as the highest personation of God, has the most beneficent, the most purifying and the most elevating influence on the minds and hearts of men, that it soothes their sorrows, dispels dispondency, and in-

spires and develops in a wonderful degree the believer's moral energies. By this faith myriads have been redeemed and absolutely transformed; and alike in life and death it has suffused them with a peace which passeth all understanding, on the basis of naturalism.

What, then, are the essential and central elements of Christ's moral greatness? What is it that constitutes the peculiar charm, the moral beauty and power of his life and teaching? We answer that it was his loving personality, and his representations of the loving personality of God as the Father. We might illustrate this at length from the Gospel narratives; but it is so clear as to be unquestionable by any mind not utterly impervious to just conceptions. Besides, the Gospels are so full of exemplifications, that we are embarrassed in an attempt to make a selection. The first that occurs to the mind is as good as any, like a handful of wheat from the bin. There is for the penitent the story of the prodigal and his father. As an encouragement to prayer, there is the story of parents being evil, yet knowing how to give good gifts to their children, as a faint type of the great Father's disposition toward all who look to Him for a blessing. For the satisfaction of the personal sympathies and yearnings of his disciples about to

be bereaved of his visible presence, he tells them that he will be absent from them only for a little while, that he will spend the interval in preparing a place where he may receive them to himself and be with them forever; and that in the meanwhile he will be their invisible companion and guest, that with the Holy Spirit and the Father he will take up his abode in their spirits.

If we take away from the life and teachings of Jesus, all affirmation and all faith concerning a personal Deity, and our personal immortality, and the immortality of all moral issues, there would be nothing left of him. He would become weak like other men, the poorest of them—like M. Comte, for instance. It seems a profanation to introduce such a name in this connection. But the profanation is not in me, but in M. Comte himself. He is the modern demiurge of naturalism, who first essayed to dispense with all supernaturalism, after a scientific method; and he has thus also put himself and his life forward as an exemplification of the operation of naturalism. He claims to fulfil his own ideal, the naturalistic ideal, as he conceives and expounds it, which allowed him to become the voluntary victim of a passionate attachment to another man's wife, and thus renew the driveling "Sorrows of Werther."

John Stuart Mill, his greatest English admirer and disciple, in the same way also took to another man's wife, though he kindly refrained from marrying her while her first husband lived; and, with the widow's hand in his, he shed a civil tear into the grave of the departed.

But we have left Jesus to look at Comte and Mill as two great apostles of naturalism, and in so doing, and as necessary to it, we have been going down, down a far steeper descent than that of Avernus, through rocky rifts to sunless depths, where all the noblest elements of our nature are congealed in eternal frost. There we leave them, and return to Jesus and his conception, and exhibition of the personal and supernatural God and Father. Here the soul feels afresh the quickening of spiritual light and warmth, in the loving personality of Jesus as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His PERSON, the infinite Personality with infinite sympathies, which embrace us all and all that concerns us. It is the supreme domination of this principle and its perfect action and development in his life which give to him his characteristic beauty and dignity, and endow him with all his amazing power over mankind. From this all other elements of his power are derived, and this is pre-supposed in all the pecu-

liar doctrines of evangelical Christianity, so that these, for our present purpose, may be left out of account.

Now, for the necessary conclusion from all this. If this central principle of the life and labors of Christ, the characteristic feature of his moral beauty and greatness, and the primal source of his marvelous and ever-growing power among men, incomparably the noblest and most beneficent that the world has ever known, if this is erroneous, then, error is universally crowned with supremest honor as the mightiest and most charming of all moral agencies. This discrowns truth, veracity, and all philosophy. Therefore, if there is any Truth, and if science and philosophy are possible, and if they are coincident with the highest moral forces and results, they are coincident with Theism, and Theism is philosophical and true. The True is the best, and the best is the True.

It would be worse than trifling to try to evade the force of this reasoning by raising the question whether error may not sometimes be a benefit. Such a question involves not only truth, but truthfulness, not only verity, but veracity. Our estimate of truth and truthfulness will always keep pace with each other, as they always have done. Whoever thinks that error will in any case be better than truth, will in that case feel justified in creat-

ing or fostering error consciously, and therefore in lying. This has been exemplied by priestcraft, and statecraft in all ages and countries; and it has been the fertile source of some of the most diabolical atrocities which stain the pages of history.

No doubt there are circumstances in which error and even deception may operate beneficially. A person who has injured his health and disordered his mind, till he sees fearful visions, and thinks them bad spirits prognosticating his speedy and eternal perdition, may be so excited and aroused to serious reflection and resolve, as to lead thenceforth an entirely new life of a truly good and noble type. But even this is not so good and noble as the same course of action from more just and wise grounds, from broad and sound views of the intrinsic worth, dignity, and beauty of virtue. The reformation of life originating in a low motive, is less exalted in character at first, than if it had a nobler origin; and the character will never entirely make up for this loss, will never be what it would if this nobler force had earlier commenced its operation. Besides, there will be a breach in the continuity of the good moral effect of the illusion when the illusion is dissipated, a breach which is not necessary when truth is the operating influence. Had he conceived his visions,

as they were, to be the psychological effects of his life, and showing the operation of necessary law, and thus foreshadowing immortal and eternal consequences; this, if fully conceived and believed, would have been far more terrible than his own interpretation, and more sure and powerful as a motive to lead a better life; and it is certain that those who thus discern the operation of law, are generally and steadily more obedient to law, than those who do not.

While it may sometimes be beneficial to divert some dangerous hallucination of the lunatic, by generating another of less serious tendency; and while there are occasional developments of good among the sane, from erroneous impressions, these are only subordinate and incidental, and contrary to the general law and tenor of human things; else conversely, error and falsehood are better in their operation than truth and knowledge, and are therefore more to be desired. This, we repeat, contradicts all thought, all science and all philosophy; these affirm that the highest good is, or is coincident with, the supreme truth. Now, it is not by accident that Christian Theism achieves its moral results, but by intrinsic nature and necessity, and according to a fundamental moral law, which is uniform, and hence to a large

degree predictable in its operations. As Theism is proved to be the highest good, it must be admitted to be the truth, unless we abandon all accepted principles, and admit that error and falsehood are the highest good; and even then we should have to retain Theism as this good.

CHAPTER X.

FAITH AND WORKS.

WHAT an ideal is to a thinker or an artist a creed is to a believer; and if the ideal is also a creed, or the creed an ideal, the influence of the ideal becomes exalted. Hence the power of Theism as a creed; and the obligation to make it a creed as well as an ideal. The moral heroes of church history would have been weak as other men without their faith. We always attribute their life in the main to their real faith.

This is a principle which is universally accepted and acted on. But our subject brings it up in a new connection, which generates a new conception and influence.

A man must act either from the strongest present proclivity, as all mere animals do; or, as a rational being, he must act from a rational purpose in view of a rational end. This end should be the highest and best which is conceived and believed to be attaina-

ble. This can never be transcended. We may fall below it. We may refuse to pursue it because, though we think it is attainable, it requires sacrifices which we are not willing to make. Many prefer the inferior pleasure, because it comes quicker and easier, to the ulterior and higher, because these demand a larger tribute than they are willing to pay. Where all faith and hope of any ulterior and higher good are utterly removed or destroyed, there can be no effort for the attainment of that higher good. The stronger proclivity will absolutely rule. According to the ruling passion, men and their lives will differ; bnt the energies and aims of all will be restricted within the circle of their faith and hopes.

If that circle is bounded by our mortal life, the highest good attainable in this life must be the highest end that any one can ever be supposed to pursue. With a very few this will be intellectual achievement and distinction. If any are born with a predominant genius for goodness, its cultivation and enjoyment may be the highest end for them; that is, if they do not find it so obstructed as to bring different elements into play with more ease and pleasure. For the mass of mankind there can be no higher end than animal pleasures, with a slight infusion here and there of something like in-

telligence; and all such will naturally snatch at pleasures as they offer, without distinction, except as very obvious and dreaded consequences of a material nature may prevent.

This nullifies all moral argumentation, for there is no principle on which we can argue. If we attempt to elevate the conceptions and aspirations of any, and so induce them to strive after a higher order of enjoyment, they may conclusively reply that the effort to rise by foregoing pleasures they can enjoy while cultivating laboriously and painfully a capacity for other pleasures, will not pay, and that it is much better, because more agreeable, to enjoy pleasures which are really at their command than to reject them for what they may never be able to compass except in a very small and unsatisfactory degree, and for a very short time. Besides, if they are supposed to be what they are in virtue of the evolution of natural forces only, of course, all argumentation on the score of duty to induce them to transcend these natural forces is absurd. They will necessarily become just what these evolving forces, including the argument or exhortation, shall make them.

All moral influences and forces which have their root in the belief of an immortal existence, and of the immortal consequences of all our action here,

will be annihilated. Be these influences great or small with the believer, they are absolutely nothing with the unbeliever; for they are forceful only as principles or ideals believed, so that whosoever is in any degree influenced by them is so far a believer.

Now, suppose that all faith in our personal immortality and eternal judgment, as Paul phrases the immortal fruitage of our life on earth, were utterly swept from the mind of man, would it be as well for man in this world? would it promote peace, progress, and mutual confidence, and beget the loftiest forms of human life and character? If it would not, then Theism is true, or else here, also, error and falsehood are better than truth.

If Theism is false yet beneficial, then science and philosophy are nullified and injurious. If it is alike false and injurious in this life, the world would be better if we were all atheists. Which of these is the truth? Is either of them true?

I do not doubt but that the world would be better if some forms of religion were either annihilated or replaced by other forms. That is not the question. That certain forms or pretences of religion are absurd or injurious, is not an argument against Theism. The question is, whether our welfare in this life would be promoted in a higher degree by

the universal belief that our personal existence ceases at death, which materialism affirms and evolution cannot deny, or by the belief that we shall live forever, and that, under the superintendence of a supernatural and all powerful, wise and just Being, we shall reap the consequences of our life here on earth? There are minds who will reply in favor of the former. But they are few, and they are never found in the front rank of men. The noblest and most enlightened minds have uniformly taken the opposite side; and these form the jury to which all intelligence must make its appeal.

Rulers, legislators, poets, historians, philosophers, priests, economists and moralists, with a singular unanimity have affirmed in all ages that the belief in a personal God and a future existence, and judgment according to the deeds of this life, is necessary to the stability and welfare of society. It is true that this has been often made an engine of priest-craft and of state-craft. But this is only an instance of the perversion of what in its normal operation is acknowledged to be a good thing; and faith in its intrinsic worth is necessary before such perversion is possible.

Still, the past judgment even of the best and ablest men may have been erroneous, and it is, of

course, possible that "modern thought," is wiser than the ancients. But the human mind was perhaps never more religious than it is to-day; and indeed very few of the most gifted and cultured minds are avowedly in favor of atheism; nor is Christian Theism waning.

Further, take another look at the elemental forces of the two theories.

One is absolutely devoid of all moral force, the other possesses the highest conceivable of all moral forces. One says: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The other says: "Let us watch and work and wait and pray, for this life is the seed-time, and to all eternity we shall gather the harvest." One says: "Snatch the pleasures which come the easiest." The other says: "Seek and pursue with all energy and constancy, and at all sacrifice, the purer and nobler and more enduring pleasures, because we shall have time to mature and enjoy them." One says: "Do good to others so far as it may be good for your earthly interests." The other says: "Do good to them so far as it will minister to their and your moral and spiritual and eternal welfare." One is of the earth, earthy. The other is the Lord from heaven, a quickening spirit. If the latter is not true, it ought to be true; and all

the best minds of the world must endeavor to make it appear true; and so they will be justified and ennobled in advocating error and falsehood, if this is not true. Thus, I repeat, science and philosophy and veracity itself are nullified, unless this is true, therefore it is true.

Now, as the Theistic conception is so clearly, and vastly superior to all other theories of the universe, it has the right of uncompeting precedence of all. If this right is not conceded, it must be owing either to perversity or ignorance and misapprehension. It may be rejected for some other theory because its excellence is not discerned. But, then, this lack of discernment may be a misfortune only, or a fault, and the effect of "an overwhelming bias" against it.

Christian Theism presents us with the conception of a Being of absolute and infinite perfection, who, as the Author of all, will secure the highest possible good from all, and to all—who will aid and comfort and give perfect and everlasting success to all his faithful servants, and will be their protector and friend now and forever; and who, if they stumble and fall, will help and protect them again, and will pity and forgive them, when they turn to him afresh. On the other hand, naturalism has nothing whatever of all this. There is nothing but an unsympathetic,

inexorable, uniform force. It has neither sympathy for the weak, nor pity for the unfortunate, nor mercy for the penitent, nor any great assurance for the good and pious, and it is utterly devoid of all power to produce the high and sublime feeling of the everlasting and triumphant superiority and glory of the good, so as to assure moral integrity that it is a king in its own right, and shall reign for ever and ever. Yet this millstone evolution would hang around our neck with the calm and assured aspect of pretended science and philosophy, telling us that it is better and nobler than the celestial halo of the eternal glory around our temples.

The essential character and the moral and religious implications of this theory are strikingly indicated in the following terrible sentence from one of its advocates, in the name of secularism : "Science has shown us that we are under the dominion of general laws, and that there is no special Providence. Nature acts with fearful uniformity—stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, merciless as death, too vast to praise, too inexplicable to worship, too inexorable to propitiate ; it has no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save."

CHAPTER XI.

REWARD OF FIDELITY.

Let us not forget that in thus claiming a practical allegiance for our ideals, I do not claim that they are absolutely true. I only claim that they are our highest rule and ground of action. But this does not prove them to be absolute truths, for then different ideals and opposing ideals would all be true. A man is bound to adopt and obey the highest ideal of existence and action that he is able to attain. Possibly, it may not be precisely true. It may be far beneath the truth, as it generally is It can never be above the truth, except in some particular and contingent mode. We can never transcend the infinite, and the infinitesimal man can never transcend the indefinitely great, the totality of the universe. We may, therefore, safely assume always that the totality of truth is at least as high as our ideal of the universe.

This, also, I say with assurance, that, if our

ideal is not objectively real, we shall wish it to be so, and we shall be dissatisfied with whatever is beneath it and in conflict with it; and, further, whether it be known or not as objectively real, we shall endeavor to build ourselves up in accordance with its requirements. This reverence for it, and this wish that it may be real, will tend to beget a hope, if not an assurance, that further light will prove its objective reality. At the very lowest, we shall reflect that it is possible, and may, therefore, be true.

This is a sufficient ground for action in accordance with it. We must act, and, as all action implies some supposition or hypotheses of methods and results, we are bound to act upon the best hypothesis. Whether the Christian hypothesis be true or not, it is the noblest in conception, and is practically the best, as it must be, and as we know from history and observation, it is.

It very often happens, in physical science, that, by proceeding in conformity with a hypothesis, we are enabled to verify or disprove it. It is in this way that science has gained her most signal victories, and it is in this way that nearly all investigation is conducted, and must be. Now, suppose we consider the Christian ideal as a hypothesis to be

verified by experience, or to be thus disproved. This supposition is a part of that hypothesis or ideal, which calls us to "taste and see." It declares that, if we act upon it, we shall verify it by experience. How, then, can any man justify himself in refusing to test it thoroughly? The process or method of testing it is not at all difficult, except as there is a difficulty in our own disposition.

Urging this point upon my skeptical friend, he replied, "How can I thus test it? According to your supreme authority, '*He that cometh unto God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*' I do not believe that there is such a Being, though I do not deny that there may be, and in this doubtful state how can I go to Him? You tell me to cast myself in faith upon Christ as a divine Saviour, when I have no faith in him except as a man, like myself, though no doubt a great deal better man than I am. How am I to do it?"

I then told the story of the skeptic in distress, who cried out, "O God, if a God there be, have pity upon me and save me!" I said, "You can at least do that. You are conscious of being very weak and blind, a self-conscious and yet helpless atom amid a universe of forces. What is your destiny you can-

not foresee, unless it be to dance on for a while in conscious aimlessness, and then to dance on forever with the consciousness forever ended. On the other hand, you know not but that Christianity is essentially true, that a conscious destiny of everlasting glory or despair is before you, and that it will be one or the other, according as you accept the Gospel. Hence, as you are bound to act in accordance with your most serious needs and the highest possibilities of things, you are bound in consistency to do no less than the skeptic I have mentioned. You ought to pray that if this ideal God of the Christian exists, He will lead you on into knowledge and light and faith; and this prayer must be a life-long prayer, unless it is changed and elevated by a conscious answer. You are bound also in every possible way to render a practical homage to this Ideal, and so to give to Christianity in its purest and noblest form as known to you your countenance and support to the utmost of your power, and that constantly and perpetually."

Skepticism may here plead, as it did in the person of my friend, that this ideal is perhaps not the highest, that an unconscious power may be ineffably above the conscious. But he was compelled to confess that this is not only ineffable, but inconceivable,

because we can conceive nothing except what corresponds to some mode of experience or consciousness. This, therefore, cannot be constructed into an ideal, because it is not an idea.

The supposition, therefore, besides being only a supposition, is a supposition of the inconceivable, and so it is no real supposition. His proposition is utterly empty. Here I confidently appealed from all such substitute and pretence of thought to the solid judgment of all thinking men, whether this is not absurd, a mere ghost of an idea, and whether the Christian Ideal is not incomparably more noble and inspiring to all good thought and feeling and action. Divesting himself of the influence of his favorite authors, and looking at the question for himself afresh, he saw and confessed that this is true. This broke down the chief moral barrier in the way of his conversion, for it revealed a practical duty as flowing immediately from it.

Following up my argument with exhortation, I said, " Act consistently, thoroughly and steadily on your own knowledge and highest conceptions, and I have no hesitation in predicting the result. If there is such a God, as I believe and know there is, He cannot disregard the prayer of such a suppliant. He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the

smoking flax. The cry of the needy, the weak, the poor in spirit, and the confessedly blind, are particularly dear to Him, and in due time He will rend the heavens, if necessary, to come to their relief. This must be so if Christianity is true. Such a worshipper must sooner or later, suddenly or gradually, enter into the 'joy of the Lord, which is your strength.'"

The Scriptures are also very clear in testifying to this principle. They tell us, even in the Old Testament, that "ye shall know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." Religious knowledge, faith, experience and power, follow a law of growth, and that law is fidelity in the use of knowledge and power already had. So Christ said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Let a man be thoroughly honest, and act up to the light he has respecting his need and his duty, and he will not remain in darkness, but shall know the truth of the doctrines of Christ.

This accords with all the laws of our nature. We always grow in the line of our work; and the wish is very naturally and generally the father of our thought. Habit always works to the same end. Action, which is at first constrained and disagreeable, becomes by repetition easy and pleasant, and

even necessary to our comfort. Ideas toward which and in sympathy with which we work become interwoven into the moral tissues of our nature as living and practical faiths. Indeed, all moral and practical faith is the product of culture. Untried, it is usually timid and somewhat doubtful, but by every successful experiment it is confirmed and strengthened. Obedience, according to our conception and knowledge, is the culturer of faith.

My friend was not slow to notice an apparent philosophical objection to this, that it makes faith the product, not of intelligence, but of volition, of sympathy and taste, and of mere iteration. This is only partially true, and in its soul and essence it is wholly false. It is true that faith comes, or is fostered and developed by these methods; but these methods are pursued in obedience to our highest intelligence, and so they have its sanction and authority; and intelligence is entitled to claim as its own and to honor with its own dignity whatever comes of conformity with its requirements.

Obedience to this conception was the chief cause of the ultimate conversion of my friend. He had many pious friends whom he loved and esteemed, and he was never blind to the exalted ideal of Christianity, nor to the moral worth of many of

its adherents, nor to the grand elation which the hope that is "big with immortality" inspires in them; and while he affected to look down upon them he really looked up to them, would occasionally go with them to church and contribute to the cause which is so dear to them. He had an ideal which, with even his irregular following of it, begot a faith which was deeper and stronger than he was aware, while his skepticism was thus rendered comparatively superficial, and it finally gave way altogether, replaced by Christian faith and peace.

It is just here that intellectual consistency and moral honesty are tested. Refusing this homage to Christianity, they are weighed in the balance and found wanting. The oracle of their own philosophy pronounces against them. On the other hand, acting with thorough consistency on their own knowledge and principles, they will, I believe, come to the knowledge of the Truth, as my friend has happily experienced.

CHAPTER XII.

AN EXAMPLE.

In order to emphasize the importance of obeying our highest conceptions as our highest authority, I will here relate the experience of one whom I well knew, a gentleman somewhat known to the public as an author, but whom I may not here name except as Mr. H———. We were quite intimate at the most critical period of our lives, when our principles were forming and fighting their way through hosts of skeptical obstructions.

His first difficulty was on the question of the freedom and necessity of the human will. He had read Jonathan Edwards on the Will, and was conquered by his subtle argumentation. In connection with this he read extensively the writings of Calvanistic divines, whose views he embraced with ardor. For a few years this seemed to give elevation and strength to his character.

But born, apparently, to test his principles at all points, Mr. H. pushed these to their utmost consequences, as others have done, and deduced from them a fatalism which destroys all personal moral quality and responsibility. Yet this conclusion was in vital conflict with his moral consciousness. Neither of these opposing internal forces could surrender, and for two or three years he lay helpless between them, like a helmless ship in the trough of the sea.

Mr. H. recovered from his supineness and the agonies of perpetual and ineffectual conflict, by a train of reflection which resulted in a determination to follow in practice and in the tenor of his thinking his moral and intellectual ideal. He reflected that the metaphysical theory of necessity in its present exposition certainly conflicts with the moral conception, that therefore one or the other must be false, or that another explanation and some modification of one or both, are necessary, in order to introduce harmony.

But which of these can possibly be subject to the required modification? This must be determined by an examination of their respective authority and influence and logical consequences. He observed that the doctrine of necessity is supposed to have

the support of observation. This is its only support in the last analysis. It is supposed that there is no deviation from the law of uniformity, that as the antecedents are the consequence must be, and that the former are alike the cause and the explanation of the latter. Now, it is barely possible that this is not a full or perfect account of the facts of the case.

What is the influence and the logical consequence of this theory? Practically, it operates in contrary directions. To the hopeful, energetic and ambitious, to many of the elect, or who think thus of themselves, it operates as an inspiration, as it did to Wallenstein and Bonaparte, Cromwell and the Puritans. But as soon as the tide turns, it operates disastrously, paralysing all the faculties. Now, in the battle of life the omens are not usually of the most encouraging kind, and these, combined with conscious inner inaptitudes, tend to discourage effort and enterprise, wherever there is any chance for a choice in the direction of inaction. We see this strikingly exemplified to-day in the Mohammedan and Budhistic countries.

In spite of all arguments to the contrary, the theory of necessity logically and practically operates against a conviction of responsibility for failures, and it especially paralyses the spirit of enterprises

which seek the world's moral and spiritual good. In the face of difficulty and from indisposition it says, "I would do so and so if I were differently circumstanced and constituted, as it would then be necessary, while now it is impossible. It is true that the means are necessary to the end, and if God has ordained both, they will both come; and if they do not come I cannot help it." So far as it is really believed by the indisposed or the evil disposed, it is logically a perfect protection to them against moral self-accusation, because they never fail to argue that they are only the necessary products of their antecedents, over which they had no control. Such is the practical influence and the logical consequence of necessitarianism. It sets before us no object and incites to no end, represses the feeling of obligation, and all the energies which come of that feeling developed and guided and incited to a high degree of power. It precludes all ideals and conscientious incitements toward their realization.

On the other hand, Mr. H. had a clear conception of a Personality of infinite perfection; of an ideal moral perfection for man, to which he is invited by God, and for the attainment of which God pledges all needful aids of his Spirit and Providence; that

man has a supernatural power to accept or reject this ideal as his end, and to secure and improve these means for its attainment, and that he may reject them; and that this constitutes his moral agency and responsibility.

He had at least as good a ground for this as he had for the doctrine of necessitarianism, observation of his own consciousness. Here, in the depths of consciousness, he felt confronted with the fact of volitional liberty, of moral conception, and consequent responsibility. The approval of his conscience, on acting in compliance with this ideal, and the self-inflicted pain from all failures, were additional confirmations of the truth and value of this great ideal.

This grand conception was with him a living reality and power. It was the one star which shone steadily upon him through the storm. Its charm and its attraction never forsook him. Though partially unattained, and unenjoyed a pain, it was yet a joy forever. It was the inspiration to all good, the chief solace in sorrow and conscious failures and ineffectiveness, and presented the brightest hope for the world.

Now, should he abandon this and give himself over to an irresponsible fatalism, or hold to this, to the exclusion of that; or should he hold to both?

The last he would have done, but he could not combine them. He therefore determined at all events to hold to the idea of freedom and moral responsibility, and to consider necessitarianism as a theory which has some strong supports, but as being at present incapable of assimilation by the highest conceptions of our life and possible destiny. Necessitarianism was therefore made subordinate, and held in abeyance, awaiting future exposition. Practical unity and energy were thus at once attained.

Mr. H. was next assailed by philosophical skepticism, styled rationalism, and then by evolution; and he treated these in much the same way as he had treated necessitarianism.

He did not consider these rejected theories or methods as refuted, but only as not having vindicated their claim on his allegiance by presenting to him a nobler ideal of life and hope than that for which they were rejected, or rather not accepted as complete and final.

By this method he acquired freedom, energy and hope; and by a provisional, or rather incipient philosophy of the highest order, he was saved for Christ, while free to prove all things and hold that which is good.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REDEMPTIVE ECONOMY.

In the previous exposition of Theism, we have carefully excluded those elements which are peculiar to the scheme of Christianity as a redemptive economy. Some may think the Theistic conception is better for this exclusion; and for their benefit it has been so given. To them the argument has its full force, and neither their good humor nor singleness of gaze is injured. Let them act accordingly.

But those who come thus far ought to go farther. Christianity detracts nothing from the glory of pure Theism, but gives to it a new and peculiar lustre. It leaves untouched all the constituent elements of Theism, while it adds others which are in harmony with them and heighten their effect. It is only as a scheme of salvation for sinners, as a remedy for an existing moral evil that Christianity proper is to be considered. If there is any man who does not con-

sider himself as justly "numbered with the transgressors," to him there is no charm in the annunciation of Gabriel to the Virgin, that her son should "be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins." It is without potency and significance relative to his own personal needs. But if he is so good and pure, he must have a pity for the sinful, and feel a deep interest in any scheme which promises to save them from their sins, as well as from their worst consequences. Let, then, this good man exercise his benevolent sympathy in gratefully and hopefully considering the claims of the New Testament plan of salvation for sinners; as he cannot doubt that there are many sinners in the world.

The sinner needs to be induced to repent and reform. He needs to know and possess the conditions and means of doing this. He needs an inspiring assurance that the fulfillment of the conditions in the use of the means will be availing according to the measure of his need. Now, the question arises: How is all this possible? How can all these provisions be furnished? How shall one who is a sinner, and sees the vile quality of sin, believe in the love of God to him, and that he can be received afresh into the heart and loving family of God? Any approaeh to flippancy in responding to such an in-

quiry would be very wrong, and be pregnant with almost infinite harm.

One thing is quite clear to us all, that thorough repentance is possible only toward love and cordial forgiveness and restoration. The penitent sinner may not hope, perhaps, much less demand, that he be made as much of as if he had not sinned, but he must hope and believe that no grudges shall be cherished in memory of the past, and that in no stinging and purposefully painful manner shall his sin be ever flaunted before him, and that it shall be held in as great a mental repression as is compatible with God's omniscience, and the creature's perfect memory; or, in other words, that it shall be remembered only with tenderness, and be mentioned or referred to only for the highest moral ends, and for the penitent's own highest good.

But where shall a sinning creature get the assurance of all this? This is a question difficult to answer, as sin necessarily brings difficulties with it of every kind.

There is a difficulty arising from the moral character of the sinner, and the mental state which his sin has necessarily engendered. He is consciously and confessedly selfish, and in a degree is morally blind, as sin always stupefies the finer sensibilities

and blunts and benumbs the moral intuitions. How is he then, in his bad life, to be impressed with the divine love and pity and readiness to forgive with full and perfect ardor of cordial affection? His natural conception of God must be in some measure a reflection of himself, so that to his mind the divine image must appear clouded and marred. Fear, distrust and aversion will be the inevitable consequence.

It will avail little to tell such a one that God is good or merciful. Words are without significance except as they are the expression of some experience, internal or external. But very bad men, who have sinned deliberately and habitually against clear conviction, in whom malignity and its associated forms of sin have become highly developed and established, have but small experience, and but very small capacity of judging or appreciating either what they hear or see as expressions or exhibitions of pity for the guilty and the vile. All philosophical reflections, and even all inspired affirmations of the love of God will therefore often need whatever support and illustration they can possibly receive in order to touch some hearts, and inspire them with a hope that pardon, and moral salvation, and fellowship with God are possible for them.

This internal difficulty in the way of a sinner's salvation through faith in the love and mercy of God toward himself is sustained and fostered by obvious and striking facts in the economy of the divine government. If our senses are regaled by beauty and fragrance, and bright skies and placid waters, they are also stung and stunned, and confounded by tempests and frosts, by floods and droughts, by famine and pestilence, and other innumerable and inevitable miseries.

It is true that many of man's miseries are the effect of his perversity and folly. But this truth is the most cutting argument against a poor sinner's hopes. It even seems to tear up these hopes by the roots, as it is the affirmation of the inflexibility of law. Nature is here absolutely stern and relentless. She is also the same to the penitent and the impenitent. To neither one nor the other does she ever recall the past. He who has lost his sight by a careless handling of gunpowder will not regain his sight by any subsequent prudence. God's expression of himself in nature, therefore, presents little comfort to the sinner. Whatever it says of the divine goodness, it speaks with equal emphasis of the divine severity, and never of the divine mercy. Hence those who identify God with nature never allow of any

mercy proper. They preach without qualification the inexorableness of law. They cannot do otherwise without flagrant self-contradiction. Nature, therefore, can give no unequivocal proof that God can thoroughly and cordially forgive and love the sinner, especially the heinous sinner.

This conclusion is confirmed by observing the almost universal judgment of the human conscience, which is generally pronounced to be the voice of God. It is certainly an expression of the natural operation of the human nature, of which God is the author; and in this light it is an expression, though imperfect, of the divine will, just as the external world, to the seeing eye, displays the eternal power and Godhead. The human conscience has always been dubious and dark on this subject; and very generally it has been intensely anxious and troubled. Hence its universal resort to sacrifices, except in the case of those who believe in him who has once offered himself for all.

Nor can any appeal to the elemental conceptions of the divine character or ideal at all avail to remove the distrust which a hard heart and life engender respecting the mercy of God. Indeed, it has always been difficult for either philosophers or divines to understand, much more to explain to gloomy, con-

science-stricken souls, how mercy is compatible with the divine perfection as a just law-giver. Forgiveness seems to belie the moral law, which is the supreme outcome of the divine nature. Hence, men have always raised the question: If God is just, how can He forgive? and philosophy has furnished no satisfactory answer.

If we attempt to fall back on the general declaration that the prime element of the divine character is love, we are called to consider that this love comprehends holiness and justice; that it is found only in the Bible, and there it is found only in connection with sacrifice for sin. We cannot, therefore, by this route take the first step away from our logical difficulty, which is a practical difficulty, in our effort to save sinners from their sins. They can never thoroughly repent without a firm conviction that the love of God is directed towards them in the form of mercy, and that through this and the help of his good spirit, they can be elevated into a pure and perfect fellowship with the Great Father and all his holy family. But this assurance cannot be furnished by the most exalted Theism, pure and simple, and irrespective of any remedial system. It cannot even be furnished by any inspired and miraculously attested revelation, if this revelation is a mere affirma-

tion of love and a promise of pardon to the penitent; because the affirmation would have to be interpreted in logical consistency with the perfect idea of the divine character; and the apparent confliction and consequent doubt would practically nullify the affirmation by the style of interpretation which would thence be put upon it.

There is a law of logical correlation, which obtains among mental and moral qualities. Every attribute implies its opposite relative to opposite objects or qualities. While patriotism is love toward our country, and everything that marks and promotes its honor and happiness, it is hatred toward everything which opposes and mars its honor and happiness. The love of beauty and of art is hatred toward ugliness, and everything which degrades or injures the spirit and products of art. So in morals and religion, goodness and severity, love and hate, are counterparts and complements of each other, and the capacity for either is a capacity for both, and the exercise of either toward one quality logically implies the exercise of the other toward the opposite quality. Benevolence itself is hatred toward whatsoever is opposed to and obstructive of benevolence and fosters sin and misery and wretchedness.

A law of absolute perfection is necessarily to be assumed as proceeding from such a God as we have described. This is implied in what has been said, but it ought to have a distinct though brief statement. Such a Being can fully approve only perfection. He must demand this in man, who must, therefore, be created perfect, or supplied with such provisions as will secure it, if properly used. The latter is the known order of the world. Moral perfection must, in some of its forms at least, be of our own making, in the use of the power and means which God has furnished and bestowed.

This perfect law can be nothing less or more than perfect love to God and all his creatures; an absolute devotion to him, and a qualified devotion to them corresponding to their relative worth, so far as we know them. This is the law of Scripture, and whether it is a supernatural communication or not, it is certainly true, as a law, for us. It is the highest possible of all moral conceptions—a conception which includes all others, and lies at the base of all others. The perfect and everlasting fulfillment of this law is the destination of all who truly make God their Ideal. He will surely help them to this great attainment, and all such must at last constitute a perfect society in perfect and exalted blessed-

ness. Such is alike the Scripture promise and the rational idea.

In the meanwhile, the question as to the best method for God to promote this end, in relation to the violators of the law, is beset with difficulties—difficulties which philosophy has never been able entirely to overcome, but which we believe are overcome by the Gospel.

The problem is : How could God show at once a pure and perfect regard for the law and its violators ?

The New Testament answers : By self-sacrifice for the sinner in subjection to the law. The sacrifice of animals proves nothing, except as they typify the need of some better sacrifice. The sacrifice of the sinner himself, in punishment by God, proves regard for law, but not for the sinner. To pardon the sinner, without any sacrifice, is to make a sacrifice of the law, thus showing concern for the sinner, but not for the sin or the law.

Now, the only way we can show a strong and indubitable regard or high estimation for anything is by making sacrifices for it. The price we are willing to pay for it is the only possible testimony we can give of our estimate of its value, or the intensity and purity of our desire for its attainment.

It is just here that nature seems to speak for the mercy of God, and in consonance with his justice. He has planted love in the heart of the animate creation ; and this love shows itself most indubitably and strikingly in self-denial for its objects. Thus, the animal suffers for its young. A good man suffers for his fellow-creatures. Fatherhood and motherhood are natural types of a love that is merciful, while regardful of right and duty. They will chastise where it pains themselves, and they will also suffer to save their children ; and they will often take the children's offences on themselves, and bear the penalty, rather than let it fall on their offspring. These are quoted by Christ as showing the disposition of God, whom he describes as the supremely good Father. As the father lovingly mediates between all in the family, regarding the rights of all, while forgiving and redeeming an offender, so God is the Father of us all.

It is just here also that the opposing theory abuts itself. It grounds on the love and mercy exhibited in men to their children and to their fellows. These, it is said, are types of God, and shew the great Father ; and that from these we may confidently infer the divine mercy to the penitent, as the great Teacher taught us. We admit that this is a good ar-

gument. We believe that God's mercy is thus emblemed. As we have already said, nature in our constitution thus affords some ground of hope to the penitent. But it should be borne in mind that we are not considering simply what may be rightly inferred by a rational and well-poised mind assured of the favor of God, but what is likely to be the feeling and action of one who is conscious of great sin, and sees and feels its true character as vile and hateful and injurious, and whose mind is thence darkened as to the character of God and the nature of true goodness, and the meaning of the terms which designate and describe it. We affirm that it would be hard for such an one to believe or conceive that God's love in cordial and full and perfect paternity could embrace him, unless he had some other reasons than man's mercy, and a verbal assertion in revelation of God's mercy to man. This is supported by the facts of history. Wicked men, where the Gospel has not come, have never been led to penitence and a filial confidence and affection toward God by reflecting on the divine mercy to sinners manifested in man's merciful disposition. The very mention of the supposition has an air which is allied to the ridiculous.

Further, the conscience-stricken sinner, the con-

ditions of whose salvation we are considering, may well reflect that the mercy of men, especially toward their own friends and kindred, may spring from moral imperfection instead of moral excellence, as it often does; and they never can show that their love and forgiveness are perfectly pure and disinterested except by their suffering for the offender and their sacrifices for his welfare, and that Christ affords no such evidence of God's love and mercy except so far as God in him actually made a sacrifice of himself for the world's redemption. Hence it is those who take this view of Christ's work who have always been the most effective preachers to the "publicans and sinners," to men and women who could make no pretension to moral and spiritual worth. It is the alleged sacrifice which God made in Christ for their salvation which has most powerfully awakened their conscience and touched their hearts and reformed their lives. This faith refutes every scruple of their conscience, fills to the utmost the deep yearnings of their aching hearts, and constitutes the loftiest and purest influence on their lives and their immortal hopes.

Nor will the fear which is born of guilt fail to see that if man's constitution is to be taken as the type of God, the comparison cannot logically be confined

to a few of man's exceptional excellences while his pride and vindictiveness and his stern and relentless demand for the fulfilment of personal rights, are ignored. The known manifestations of human pity and mercy are no decisive proof that the love and mercy of God embrace all his creatures, however wicked. It may help in some degree our faith in the divine goodness, especially to his own servants and children, who are not consciously and wilfully rebellious and this is all that Christ designed in this reference. There is here no absolute assurance to the sinner.

If God is imperfect like man in his moral character, there is no sure guarantee of good to those who have wilfully displeased him. If God is infinitely perfect, as the true God must be, he can only faintly be adumbrated by man, and his integrity may require that the full penalty of the law fall on each transgressor. Certainly it can never make light of the law and its transgression. It must hold the one in infinite reverence and the other in infinite detestation; and how this can operate with mercy for the sinner, remains for the sinner the problem of problems. Nothing can fully assure him till a method is unfolded which satisfies both his intellect and his heart, which reconciles the divine perfections, reveals

an equal scope for the divine justice and mercy, and shows the Almighty as at once "a just God and a Saviour." Till this is done the sinner is liable to gloomy forebodings and to the moral depression and depravation which these entail. It should be observed, too, that a clear view of the heinous nature of sin and of the sacredness and immutability of the moral law is necessary to a sinner's reformation and true moral renovation; and it is this view which here forms the obstacle to his salvation till he sees how this sacredness of the law can be conserved by God at the same time that he delivers the sinner from the penalty which it justly denounces against him This is the only testimony that we can accept or understand respecting God's love alike for the law and its violator, the testimony which is furnished in the doctrine of the divine incarnation and atonement by Jesus Christ. Christ is, in some peculiar and extraordinary way, "God manifest in the flesh," subject to the law in serving man, "magnifying the law and making it honorable" by such extraordinary subjection and obedience to it; and then He dies as if He were a sinner, declaring that all this is done that He may save the sinner "dying the just for the unjust that He may bring them unto God." If in Christ God makes no manner of sacr

fice, the New Testament is false and misleading; and we still want proof that God loves both the law and its violator; and the possibility of mercy to any sinner remains inexplicable.

If, on the other hand, God did make a sacrifice, every difficulty in the way of a penitent sinner's faith and hope, is removed. Here we have the ideal of Theism exalted to a loftier height, and pregnant with an effective beneficence which is impossible without this sacrifice. This is the true ideal because it is the highest, on the same principle on which we have argued for the truth of Theism, irrespective of the peculiar doctrine of the New Testament as a scheme of salvation for sinners. If the highest good is not the true, then science and philosophy are on the wrong track in pursuing truth as the highest end or good.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAN GOD SUFFER?

THIS is resisted in some quarters on the ground that God cannot suffer. Here we meet a metaphysical principle which has held extensive sway in philosophy, and often extended its influence into the domain of theology. But it has always appeared to me that an incapacity for all suffering is itself a mark of limitation and imperfection. A faculty of enjoyment is also a faculty of suffering, because every such faculty must follow a law of enjoyment, and when that law is transgressed, it becomes a source and agency of pain. This is exemplified in all the senses. It is also exemplified in the æsthetic faculty; and the more exquisite the taste, the keener is the pleasure or the pain from the fulfillment or violation of that law. The same principle holds good of the logical faculty and its laws. Love in all its forms is a source of intense delight, and for

the same reason it is, when crossed, a source of corresponding pain. Now, combine love with the moral faculty and we have the holy love of God, which He feels toward all his creatures, but especially toward the good. Their virtue and happiness must be a source of pleasure to Him, and for the same reason their sin and misery must be a source of pain. This is what the Scriptures affirm. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Scripture abounds in the most ardent expressions of divine joy and sorrow over the different moral conditions and prospects of men. The pity and sympathy of God are also depicted in the most vivid colors. If all these expressions mean nothing, if they do not mean just what they say, He who is called God is no God to me. I would rather have a man or a woman for my friend than he. To him I can never go for comfort, or to unbosom to him my griefs and cares. A god without sympathy, is a god without love or hate —a mere wooden thing—not God. A god without moral displeasures is without moral pleasures, and displeasures are pains, and are therefore put as the correlative of pleasures. A capacity for pain or suffering and self denial in some degrees and forms is necessary to the existence of God, without which He would not be God.

It is unavailing to object that this makes God partially unhappy, and thus limits his perfection. God is just as happy as the totality of infinite capabilities render possible; and the supposition of any higher happiness than that is self contradictory. The degree of pain is infinitesimal relative to the pleasure, and the capacity for the former is necessary to the latter, and so is a constituent of his dignity, glory and felicity.

While the prevailing philosophy concerning the passionlessness of the divine nature has been productive of frequent inconsistencies among orthodox divines, yet, they have always affirmed, explicitly or implicitly, that incarnate in Christ God suffered in sacrifice for the world's redemption. In the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem, is described as using the following language: "He who died for us was no insignificant creature. He was no mere man, he was not an angel; but *He was God.*" Hence he infers that "the sins we have committed are not equal to the atonement made by him who died for us." Dr. Shedd tells us that the Nestorians erred in making Christ's sufferings purely human, and that the Eutychians erred in the opposite direction by making those sufferings to be purely divine, and that the Church teaches that Christ suffers as a theanthropic

person, as both human and divine in nature, as the God-man.

Anselm's great work on the atonement, *Cur Deus Homo*, is pregnant with the same idea. He argues that God cannot pardon sin without a satisfaction to justice, and that this satisfaction in a scheme of mercy is possible only by substituted or vicarious suffering, that no finite sacrifice can suffice, and that God only can make the required satisfaction. It is obvious that the satisfaction and sacrifice on the part of God are nullified if God does not in any wise suffer. The doctrine of Anselm respecting the divine sacrifice has always been the doctrine of the Church, East and West. The Church also has always held to his ground of the sacrifice, as a sacrifice to justice, although it has sometimes differently expounded justice in its relation to the sacrifice.

Of the forms of the sacred and divine passion we are indisposed to speak. With caution and reverence we tread this hallowed ground. If Christ is a theanthropic person the suffering belongs to that person in its totality. This will include even physical suffering, to the conditions of which God has subjected himself. At the very least, and in any case, Christ is the representative impersonation of Deity, and from sympathy and federal identity Deity may thus

suffer in Christ as a monarch suffers in the indignities put upon his ambassador. On this subject we prefer to say no more.

CHAPTER XV.

ATONEMENT.

In the statement that Christ suffered to show the divine regard for law on the one side and for the sinner on the other side we have given the substance of our philosophy of the Christian doctrine of the atonement, and it is therefore proper here to give that doctrine a more explicit statement.

We hold that the suffering of Christ was substitutionary or vicarious. But these words, just used, must not be interpreted in any very narrow and rigid sense. This substitution does not find its precise parallel in the voluntary death of one man to save another from death. Here the deaths are parallel. Not so are the death of Christ and that from which the sinner is saved. Christ does not save from the kind of death which he undergoes. He dies a temporal and physical death to save from spiritual, legal and eternal death. He therefore does not suffer either

in kind or degree an exact equivalent for the sins of men. It is true that he may have suffered as much as all the redeemed would have had to suffer. But we have no proof that he did, and the supposition is revolting, as giving to the Deity a sort of Shylock aspect of pound for pound. Then, there is no economy in this. If the full measure of suffering has to be indured, there is nothing gained to benevolence, and one party may as well suffer as another, so far as concerns pure and universal benevolence. The supposition differs from the normal operation of justice only in its transference of punishment from the guilty to the innocent. In this case, it were surely better for the guilty to bear their own punishment, and for the innocent to enjoy the rights and immunities of their innocence.

It is true that it may be well for one friend to pay the entire debt of another friend; but the substitution of Christ is not of this kind, else the sinner's liberation would not be of grace, but of debt or right and justice. which the apostle Paul repudiates, and which every sinner's reason and conscience repudiate.

Besides, if, as the particular redemptionists affirm it is the Deity in Christ that gives to Christ's suffering their supreme value, the entire conception is thus

stultified because there is no third party here. He to whom all the debt is due, pays all the debt Himself; that is, there is no payment at all. The creditor suffers the entire loss of the original defalcation, and then He voluntarily throws away an equivalent to it; and on this ground he remits the sin and debt of the defaulter! Thus this theory of atonement, which boasts its regard for strict retributive justice, is absolutely devoid of its alleged prime quality.

If Christ, *as a mere creature*, comes in as the third party, and besides fulfilling his own debt to God, also pays ours by suffering in our place, then indeed we have a parallel to one man's payment of a debt for another. But here, we repeat, there is no mercy in either case, and the only evidence of benevolence is exhibited by the man Christ who pays the debt, not by the creditor, God, since he exacts and receives all his due, sacrificing nothing, and remitting nothing.

Besides, such a conception of one creature meeting the moral obligations of another is contrary to all reason and Scripture. It is self-contradictory, because all moral merit and demerit are exclusively and absolutely personal and individualistic. Every creature is also bound by the supreme law of his being to serve the Lord with his power, so that when he has done his best he is but an unprofitable servant, and all

works of supererogation are impossible. In short, on this theory of equivalence of suffering, (which is only an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth) neither God nor man can make any atonement for a sinner.

All suffering is substitutionary or vicarious, whatever its form or degree, when it is voluntarily incurred to save any person from the legitimate consequences of his wrong action. It is at once a proof of love to the transgressor, and of reverence for the power, whatever that may be, which condemns and punishes the transgression. In the light of this principle, the Scripture doctrine of atonement, by the vicarious suffering of Christ, becomes distinctly intelligible and definable. It now becomes susceptible of illustration by parallelisms in human action. An atoning sacrifice is love voluntarily suffering for another for the removal of sin and its consequences; and all such sufferings is such a sacrifice.

The sufferings of father, mother or other friends, to save an erring one from a bad course and its consequences, are true types of the Father and the Son in the Gospels.

The quality of the sufferer here is a point of prime importance. There is an infinite sacredness and dignity attaching to all suffering, of which the Deity is the subject. Therefore, we do not essay to deter-

mine how much Christ has suffered. We have no standard of measurement for the suffering of such a being, so that this point must be left in absolute indefiniteness. Yet we must be explicit in affirming and repeating that the suffering of Deity must be real. God does not merely give dignity to the suffering of the man Christ Jesus, but also and truly suffers in unison with the man ——, else we have proof of the man's love and holiness only, not of God's.

The sacrificial suffering here affirmed was not an arbitrary transaction. Though voluntary, it was a moral necessity. Men's action toward Jesus was the normal operation of their nature relative to their circumstances, and his character and teachings. On the other hand, the action of Deity in Christ had a like necessity, only here it was more absolute, being the result of an eternal mutuability. With God nothing can be arbitrary. Everything he does must be in accordanee with the intrinsic law of his nature of infinite perfection, and it is always alike proper and right, and even a duty as well as a moral necessity. Being infinitely perfect, he could not do either better or worse, because he always does, and must do, what is best supremely. "We, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak!" Every

man is bound to love his neighbor, even though his neighbor be wicked ; and he is, therefore, bound to endeavor, by all available means, to benefit and save his neighbor. This is the law of the divine nature, which must make its demand upon himself, and for that reason it makes a demand on all intelligences. This is the law of love, which is also the true and supreme law of justice. Hence, God could not have elected to pass over man without any effort for his salvation, much less could he have sent all to hell because of such neglect of them. Still further, if it were possible to make provision for all, he could not possibly elect to save some and make provision for them only, and pass over the rest, and then damn these for ever for the necessary consequence. He was bound to save all, if possible, and to make provision accordingly, so far as possible. While sinners have forfeited all claims which belong to righteousness, they have not forfeited any of the claims which belong to them as sentient beings. These never can be forfeited. So long as such beings exist, their sufferings have a paramount claim upon goodness and love ; and, on the other hand, goodness and love necessarily fly, wherever possible, to the relief of misery, whatever be its cause. Of course, the misery cannot be relieved without the

removal of its cause ; and, if the cause is moral, the principle holds with supreme and absolute emphasis. Here, therefore, holy love seeks, first and supremely. the necessary moral change. If the moral change cannot be effected, the misery is immutable. Whether this is or will be so, in any case, does not concern our present discussion.

So the man Christ Jesus, learning the will of the heavenly Father, was bound to co-operate therewith, in consonance with the primary duty of all to do what they can for the good of all. But, in "the Son of Man," as such, while there was no moral obligation, there was a moral necessity. He was under probation with the special or supernatural moral freedom, which, by logical necessity, belongs to all who are making their own moral character and destiny. He could have rejected the yoke which was laid upon him ; that is, he could have sinned and fallen along with other men. But, being faithful, he becomes the "Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe."

The sacrificial offering of Christ does not necessarily affect the moral character of the sinner. It does not remove his intrinsic guilt and put it on Christ. The transgressor of the law is still a sinner, guilty, and the necessary object of moral reprobation. The

intrinsic moral demerit of the party for whom the sacrifice is made remains inimutably the same as surely as the woof remains in the web. The death of Christ only so far changes the relation of God to the sinner and the dishonored and desecrated law, that He can more fully carry out with propriety and best effect his benevolent wishes toward the sinner; and it gives the sinner the highest possible ground for trusting the mercy of God. It is with the highest and holiest majesty that God can now say to the sinner: "Turn unto me and I will receive you, and the past shall be covered up as lead is sunk in the sea." In "receiving sinners," God cannot now be suspected of "making light of sin." A moral majesty which combines infinite loveliness and awfulness, now appears alike in every word of admonition and warning, and in every expression of tenderness and every gracious promise and invitation.

The atonement, which is the ground of the alleged "justification" of the believer, does not either make or prove him just. He is not just, and never can be, in the sense of meeting all just claims. His past sin must ever remain as the monument of an undischarged and undischargeable obligation. The atonement is rather a justification of God than of man, as

it is a proof of the divine justice and benevolence, revealing him as a "just God and Saviour." The believer's justification is the believer's pardon, with a sufficient reason for it. The mystery which has been wrapped around the term justification relative to believers has not invested it with an element of either power or beauty. Its removal dissipates perplexity and gathering skepticism, and permits the rays of the divine mercy to fall upon us without obstruction or diffraction. Its diffraction may please the fancy of some, but only those who do not perceive or care that it involves, by obstruction and dissipation, a diminution in the effective operation of the blessed, life-giving and life-sustaining agency.

The atonement, thus conceived, reveals the harmonious action of the divine attributes. This has always been one of the great difficulties in the way of a logical and philosophical exposition of Christian theology. Philosophy has never been able to conceive how the divine attributes can be fully exercised in consonance with each other. Hence we have been presented with the paradox that divine justice must punish to the utmost all transgression, and that divine love and mercy must prevent all misery from whatever cause, because both attributes, it is said, are equally infinite. On the other hand, to escape

the difficulties respecting the perfect operation of justice and mercy, others have invented the doctrine of gradation in the relative dignity and importance of the attributes and excellencies of the divine mind. Benevolence they exalt above justice, and hence claim that it is but right and proper that, as there is a confliction between the two, justice should yield to love. This argument contradicts itself, for it pleads that it is right or just to dispense with what is right and just! We cannot justly argue for the suspension of justice or for any subordination which restricts its full and proper action. None of the attributes of God can be subordinated and held in abeyance. That would show him imperfect. His entire nature is always right, and must have unlimited scope and exercise, and so the attributes must he reconciled without relative subordination and without restriction of any.

In further attempting this reconciliation, justice is pronounced to be only a mode of benevolence, benevolence being the all-comprehending virtue, and justice one of the modes in which it works, a mode which may or may not exist and operate, according as wisdom in view of the relations of things may demand. But this again is only a plea for the suspension of justice on the ground that the suspension

may sometimes be right and reasonable. Whether or not justice be a mode of benevolence, it is certainly no transient or mutable mode, or one which is limited in time, or place, or circumstance. It is but an identical proposition to say that it cannot lawfully or righty be ignored in the act or thought of any intelligent being. Nothing is gained, therefore, by calling it a mode of "benevolence guided by wisdom." It none the less demands obedience and satisfaction everywhere and always.

If benevolence is considered as synonymous with love, justice is a mode of benevolence in the sense that all other attributes are so, under the idea that God is love. But this only confuses instead of simplifying. The declaration that God is love is not a perfect description of the divine attributes. God is love only toward what is intrinsically or instrumentally good. Toward all else we may say that God is hate. Love implies hatred. It is self-contradictory to suppose the former without the latter. He who loves the right hates the wrong. This hatred is not benevolence, though it is coincident with benevolence, and its operation will have a benevolent result; but its sole and simple aim is to destroy or disable the sin, or to punish it.

Now, as God must feel this hatred to sin with in-

finite purity and emphasis, he must give it vent in some action relative to the sinner; and before his benevolence can deliver the sinner, this feeling must be crystalized or organized in some adequate expression of its nature and demands. This is possible only by substitutionary suffering, and this is expiation, and an example of that vindicatory justice which does not terminate on the offender. In accordance with this, we adopt the formula in which Dr. Hodge gives the orthodox view of the atonement of Christ, that it is "a real satisfaction, of infinite inherent merit, to the vindicatory justice of God, so that he saves his people by doing for them and in their stead what they were unable to do for themselves, satisfying the demands of the law in their behalf, and bearing its penalty in their stead; whereby they are reconciled to God, receive the Holy Ghost, and are made partakers of the life of Christ to their present sanctification and eternal life." But it is inevitable that different meanings must be attached to the same words by different minds, and our conception of this formula, therefore, demands a little exposition.

What is due to any being as sentinent and possessed of various powers which may be used for good or evil? What is due to righteousness?

What is due to unrighteousness or anti-righteousness. The answer to these three questions will cover the whole subject under discussion; and as briefly as possible we will give the answers which appear to us to be true, and final or ultimate.

1. What is due to any being or beings, as sentient and possessed of various powers which may be used for good or evil? We answer—love, a love which takes pleasure in those powers as such, and in their action and development to the highest degree, and hence a love and a pleasure which are proportioned to the respective degrees of those powers. This is what President Edwards calls "the love of being," in which he considers virtue essentially to consist. It would be easy to show by various facts that this is the principle on which all men form their judgments, and that it underlies all their moral decisions. But we will not enlarge. If any one asks why this is due to all being from all being, there is no answer. This is an ultimate principle, and for those who cannot see it there is no help, except possibly in illustrations, in which we cannot indulge. We are here at the last remove of thought in the moral region; and however much we may multiply examples, which each may do for himself, we have to depend at last on our own power of pure syn-

thetic intuition as our only light. He who lacks this and sees not this principle must here be left out of account. He is either beneath or above us and for him we do not write.

This principle requires and implies that being shall be thus delighted in any case only so far as its development is not contrary to the laws of development for all; else we do not love all being as being, but only this or that being, which is contrary to our prime principle, and is selfish, sinful.

Universal benevolence is thus seen to be the fundamental moral law of all being, whether of God or man; and by law here we do not mean merely a uniform series of facts, but a uniform obligation, whether it be transmuted into fact or not. In other words, this is the claim which each and every sentient being makes on all others who have intelligence and will, and this claim is made because it is just and right. Thus benevolence itself is grounded in justice, and it may be pronounced to be merely a mode of justice, with as much propriety as justice is pronounced a mode of benevolence. Nay, far more so. Pure benevolence can enforce nothing. Only rights and justice can enforce anything. These are therefore the primary conceptions of moral philosophy, and these *enjoin* universal benevolence. Universal be-

nevolence is right and just, and for this reason it is approved and extolled.

2. What is due to righteousness or righteous being? We answer—approval of it, and identification with it in such forms and connections as we think will best enable us to promote it, and with it also, therefore, the greatest well-being of the universe. Here the greatest well-being is seen to be righteousness, and non-moral well-being is subordinate to this.

3. What is due to unrighteousness? We owe to this hatred, detestation and active antagonism with all the powers of our being, as against what has no right to exist, and what ought to be destroyed, and must so far as possible be divested of power, because it is wrong, and it is wrong because it is opposed to the first law of all being, universal benevolence. It is wilfull, partial and selfish love instead of universal, and hence it is hatred toward all that opposes its selfishness, that is, against all that is right.

But how is this antagonism against wrong to be exercised? According to the law of right, which enjoins the love of being, of all being, and which therefore enjoins the removal wherever possible of whatever dishonors and injures any being. It binds all the holy universe to use all its power to destroy sin, and thus save its wretched subjects and victims.

Where all possible efforts are futile, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power must ensue; but before this, all possible efforts must be made.

How is this to be done?

By the most clear and powerful manifestations of the terrible and detestable nature and operation of sin; of the self-created and self-perpetuated baseness and guiltiness of the sinner, since he has chosen the evil, and rejected the right and good, when he had power to do otherwise; of the moral horrors which it must entail on its subject, the utter perversion, darkness and chaos with which it blights and drapes and curses all things; the infinite sacredness of the violated law, and its awful power to avenge itself on its transgressor, and the certainty and relentlessness of its dire operation, in remorse, the internal and insatiable viper, the reptile which never dies, and in the burning fever-agony of chagrin and shame, and self-despite under conscious and everlasting failure and ruin, and under the clear and cloudless gaze, which is ever fixed upon them from the holy, happy universe, and from God over all blessed forever, whose eye searches them through and through, and sets their sins in the light of his countenance.

It is also to be done by showing, on the other

hand, the charm and beauty, the strength and grandeur of holy love, how it gives to the humblest of its subjects the intellectual and moral breadth and elevation which comprehend the universe; how it must eventually gain the victory, yea, become more than conqueror over all the selfish forces which now battle so bitterly against it, and from the throne of its eternal triumph look down upon its vanquished foes only to gather inspiration for its ceaseless song of praise unto him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever; how, in the meanwhile, it knows no desire so strong, no joy so deep, so rich and sweet as the promotion of the salvation of sinners, that for this it freely makes the greatest of all possible sacrifices, that the eternal God, himself eternal love, makes the infinite sacrifice of sufferings mysterious and awful in the creature's form and the creature's place, that He may bring that creature back from self and sin, to holiness and love; how there is hence a pathway of escape opened up to the lost, with guides and helps according to need along the route; and how forgiveness of sin, and forbearance with entailed infirmity await them, and how the all powerful sanctifying grace and the loving embrace of the eternal and holy Father are ready to enfold them, and to introduce them into all personal and blessed moral associations and harmonies.

All this is the measure of value, which God and the holy creation set upon the restoration of the sinner. It is the necessary proof of the high value they set upon his happiness, and is thus in the highest meaning and degree a vindication of the power and dignity of love. It proves in like manner how much they esteemed holiness or righteousness, and how much they desired it in the sinner, and thus it is a vindication of the right, or of duty and justice.

Therefore, it is a vindication of the law. All this suffering and effort are in conformity with the law, and in obedience to the law, in order that the transgressor of the law may be delivered from his transgression and its penalty. This, in the highest sense, is vindicatory justice and expiation of sin. It is thus that Christ bears our penalties, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

This fulfills the law relative to the Creator, as it meets all the demands which his own nature makes. It must be so, since it is of his own appointment and execution, and is declared and accepted by him as a satisfaction. Necessitated by his infinite perfection, He has obeyed to the last jot and title the law of holiness and love, which demanded these efforts for the destruction of sin, and the salvation of the sinner. Here, therefore, nothing more is wanting.

Nor is anything wanting on the part of the unfallen holy creation. They have concurred and co-operated with their Creator, and have fulfilled his will, and with him, as just and holy, they are satisfied with and rejoice in the process and result.

It meets all the wants of the redeemed sinner, as seen in the issue, his sanctification. He is more than satisfied. The sinner's wants or miseries and sinfulness, make a demand on the sinless for such efforts and measures as are necessary for his salvation, whatever these may be, and they demand no more. The sinner's salvation is one proof that the demands have been met, that all the law of the case has been fulfilled.

Nothing now remains. There is no law in the universe except the law of the creative and created natures. There is no abstract law which does not grow out of these. The law of laws for the all universe to all eternity, is the perfect nature of the infinite God, and its law is love, the love of being and of right, or benevolent and holy love. The work of Christ is God's great vindication of himself by a great and successful effort and sacrifice for the generation of love and holiness in a sinful race. Sin had aspersed him as well as marred his work; and among the fallen, at least, there was a doubt of his perfec-

tion, and this doubt is the greatest of all calamities to the universe. Let it spread, and all lights burn dim, all the chimes of the universe reveal a discord or a diminution of their harmony. The perfect rapture of the good and pure is no more. That highest lustre of face and eye, visible glory of the rapt soul in its worship of the Infinite, has passed away. The highest felicity and beauty and power of the finite can only be attained in its absolute abandon in a consciously accepted service and adoration rendered unto a Personality of infinite perfection. The exhibition and proof of this perfection, was therefore of supreme importance. All else, however great, compared with this, is a mere bagatelle. The fuller exhibition of himself, therefore, was the highest end He could ever propose, even for the salvation of the universe, as this is the highest and mightiest of all possible moral reasons and forces. He needed, therefore, to obey, and thus reveal, his own nature of love and holiness, so far as was necessary to attain the end sought in the creature, and then all moral law from the nadir to the zenith of the moral universe is fulfilled. No law called for anything but such action as would exhibit in brighter colors the divine perfection in love and holiness or righteousness, and secure the moral recovery of sinners,

so that Christ should thus see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

According to the foregoing exposition of the atonement, it follows that if man could have been rescued without any sacrifice it would have been done, and the saved soul would have been just as acceptable as it is now, as bought with the precious blood of Christ. This must be admitted, and if it cannot be defended, our exposition is wrong.

Against this it is often argued that if man were recovered from his sinful estate without an atonement for his past sin, that sin would still call for vengeance, and would debar his restoration to the privileges of the family of God till justice had a victim either in the sinner or a substitute. This is a supposition which perhaps ought not to be made, because it is a supposition of the impossible. At all events, no sinner can be spiritually restored, except by the grace of God, and the holy love which has done this cannot do otherwise than love, embrace, and foster its own holy image and offspring, sacrifice or no sacrifice. Any other supposition contradicts itself.

God "will have mercy and not sacrifice." If a creature is pure and holy, that is all that God can ever ask. It is all that He ever does ask or enjoin.

"Be ye holy" is his supreme command. Holiness is perfectly satisfied with holiness, wherever and whenever it finds it. It cannot reject its own likeness in a soul because it has not always been there. It is so far unconcerned about the past. Times and the differences of past times are here impertinent. Holiness loves holiness in all beings, and accepts and loves all its subjects with perfect and supreme delight. It cannot wait for or demand any other satisfaction as a condition of enjoying this; and indeed to holiness there can be but one demand and one satisfaction—holiness. Holiness, then, would be content if man were spiritually restored without sacrifice. Holiness includes justice, and neither is opposed to aught but sin; and sin being removed, they gladly sheath their sword.

Much more obvious is this principle relative to the divine benevolence. This seeks happiness only, but in consonance with holiness; and while it withholds its benefactions from all that is wrong, it is free and lavish everywhere else. The law of love, which is also the law of justice, enjoins that only sin shall be hated and chastised; and that therefore where the sin is removed aversion and opposition are to be replaced by affection and favor.

But, as we have said, it was impossible for man to

be restored without a sacrifice. God performs no superfluous task. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and only the blood of the incarnate Deity would suffice. Sin alienates the offended from the injured party, and begets an unbelief in goodness and holiness, while at the same time it fosters an obstinate pride relative to its own wrong doing. Nothing but self-denying or sacrificial exhibitions of love and purity can reveal the beauty of holiness and the sacredness of love, or ever touch the obdurate spirit of wicked pride, and lead it to confession and self-humbling, or dissipate its dark unbelief, so that in true penitence and faith it can accept a proffered amnesty. It is only this which made the great sacrifice necessary. "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son" to save it. Love, holy love, was the sole motive, and man's opposite character was the sole need, so that man's spirit could not be favorably impressed by aught less than the divine incarnation. Deity in the place and form of man, subject to human obligations and infirmities, and thus as the sinless victim of his own love to man dying as if he were the sinner, and for the sinner's sake. This is satisfactory to the extent of compensating for the sacrifices. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The attracting power

of the cross was the end of the sacrifice, and the latter the means to the former. We have thus given what appears to be a rational account of the atonement, but we do not assume that we have exhausted the subject. There is doubtless here an infinite depth which our finite plumb-line can never fathom, the shadow of a sacred mystery before which we stand in devout and speechless awe. But we have light enough to see a wisdom and goodness in this doctrine which meets all the demands alike of our intellect and heart, and that whatever of mystery remains is only dark with excess of light, and is necessarily in harmony with the light in which our intellect dwells and operates.

CHAPTER XVI.

ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION.

If the Christian Conception is superior to all others, so that it stands without a rival worthy of competitive consideration, and if this Conception, instead of losing, acquires fresh lustre with the progress of thought and the advancement of the human mind, (as it must do if it is infinitely perfect,) the question naturally arises: What is the origin of this Conception? How did we come to arrive at it? We will now consider this question as an appendix to the foregoing argument.

The history of this Conception is perfectly clear. We derive it from the Jewish race. This race is now about four thousand years old, for we know just when and where it began, and we have a remarkably clear and full, though terse, account of its founder and of this line of his posterity. In all this period this race has done nothing eminently great or good except in the production of the Bible; and all the

glory of the persons it describes is derived from their teaching and exemplification of the Christian or Theistic Ideal. The volume contains some noble and sublime poetry; but this poetry derives all its force and elevation from the Theistic Idea. The same is true of all its prose teachings both in the Old and New Testaments. There appears to have been one great secular man among them, Soloman—almost a Bacon in royal robes, if you judge from some descriptions of him. Yet, if you scan him with a critical judgment, his greatness some what dwindles. The evidences of it are rather meager and unsatisfactory. His surpassing greatness is relative only to the Jews and other Jewish monarchs, not to the great men of the gentile world.

It is clear that the Jews conceived God as personal, and as the absolute Creator of men and matter, and all other finite things. This, exalted and refined, is the granite foundation of all that Christ taught and the apostles preached, and constitutes a part of these teachings. The conception of the personality of God was common to all polytheists, and the Jewish notion may be hence explained, but only partially; for the Jew, the true Jew, discarded polytheism, and combined, in an inexplicable way, the divine unity and personality, and omnipresence,

distinct from the world—an idea which, in its complexity and unity, was absolutely peculiar to him, and is still peculiar to him and the Christian religion. How he attained to this idea, which no philosophy has yet attained or is able to conceive—an idea, too, which no religion contains, is a problem which we cannot easily solve, on the principles of mere naturalism. If Moses received it by the supernatural inspiration of God and the teachings of his forefathers who were so taught, as he affirmed, then the problem is solved. If the possibility of supernaturalism is denied, we have, then, an unsolved problem, at least, if not an insoluble one; and we are certainly entitled to say now, in reference to the problem, that the possibility of a naturalistic solution seems very improbable, as something very extraordinary will have to be discovered as a condition of such a solution, in accordance with the laws of sound criticism and induction.

If we pass on to the times of Jesus, we find a similar difficulty, in conceiving the wonderful additions which were then made to the Theistic conception. We can discover nothing in those times, or in the condition of the Jewish nation, that could betoken such a change, or be the cause of such an effect. The nation was writhing under the iron

bondage of Rome, and its better energies were stifled, or embittered and contracted, the natural consequence of oppression and wrong. Their bigotry and exclusiveness had now attained their most perfect development. The Messiah whom they looked for was exclusively a Jew in all the qualities of his nature, in the ends he was to accomplish, and in the limitation of his sympathies. There appears, therefore, absolutely nothing to foster the character and conceptions of Jesus. We may, therefore, well ask concerning him, as his contemporaries did, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

How knoweth he, and teacheth with so much clearness, force, and authority what man had never thought, what opposed all the tendencies, and established usages and tenets of his country and his age? It is a question which the ages have in vain endeavored to answer satisfactorily without having recourse to supernaturalism. We do not here affirm that such solution is impossible, but only that past efforts of the kind are not the best examples of sober and sound criticism, and scientific inductions from known facts; that the prospect for a just and sound naturalistic solution seems very far off; and that in the meanwhile, if there is a personal God distinct from the known universe, the supernatural

solution is the more natural and reasonable; though, if there is no such God, pure naturalism is necessary.

Naturalism will find another difficulty of the same kind in the further addition or rather exposition of the conception of Christianity as seen in the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles. If, with Renan and others of his class, we give a low and somewhat vulgar exposition of their spirit, yet there still remains their new views on which they professedly acted, and the world-wide sympathies of Paul and his party. These were explained by the Apostles themselves, as the effects of supernatural grace. No other solution can we find in their antecedents, and all attempts I have ever seen to furnish another are crude and vulgar beyond description.

The standing naturalistic explanation is that, though not intellectually distinguished, the Jewish race, and the Shemites generally constitute the natural religious genius of the world. But this is only an assumption, and an assumption of the point in debate. It is true in effect that the Jews have developed the most religious genius of any people, but whether that genius is natural or supernatural is where the opposing parties divide; and an explanation which simply assumes this on either side, can of course, be of no force with the other side or party.

Besides, if they possess a natural religious genius, how is it that this naturalistic genius all runs in the groove of supernaturalism? Is it the law of nature to contradict herself? If their genius is natural, their supernaturalism is natural in its origin and authority, so that nature itself, by its operation and effect, teaches supernaturalism. On this assumption, therefore, of a natural religious genius, it is surely more reasonable to infer that its distinctive and characteristic deliverances are true than that they are false.

Besides, what is genius and what is its value? Genius is an eminent and characteristic power to think and to think truly, and to create an enthusiam of faith and action in obedience to its thoughts? In what, then, consists the alleged religious genius of the Jew, and what is it worth, if that genius, so called, is always misleading and false? The Jew has shown no religious genius, except for supernaturalism and in vital connection with supernaturalism; and if this is false, it is absurd to attribute to him a religious genius at all.

If, in accordance with naturalism and its law of evolution, we are told this was true for them and their times, we reply that it is therefore equally true for us Christians and our times; because we believe

it as profoundly, and esteem it as highly as they ever did ; and the number of those who thus think and feel is steadily increasing as the years and centuries succeed each other.

This response from naturalism or evolution, implies that the question, what is truth? is only a question of times and places, and subjective differences, and this again destroys the significance of the question, for the question is general in its meaning and implication, and assumes that there is a general truth, a truth that is equally good and authoritative relative to all.

But according to evolution and all naturalism, this is false. There is no such general and immutable truth. Truth varies with men and their times; and it is what appears to them agreable and harmonious. All our inquiries about truth are only inquiries as to what notions happen to please the inquirer, so called.

In constructing a theory of the universe under the name of philosphy, we are thus only constructing a theory that happens to please ourselves, and it is good only for us, and for those who happen to be pleased with what pleases us; and it is of no authority for either us or them, for with the evolution of a fresh taste or judgment we are absolved from all prin-

ciples which we had previously acknowledged. Naturalistic evolution is thus a Dean Swift's dream of Laputa affirmed in sober earnest in the name of philosophy.

Naturalism denies to thought the power to transcend nature or our natural experience. In so doing it is consistent.

This denial is necessary and fundamental to the system. Hence, if this system is true, all supposed and alleged supernaturalism, even in thought, is a delusion. In reality we are all naturalists purely and we differ from each other only in that, those of us who claim to be supernaturalists do not understand ourselves, nor the meaning of our own words. When we speak of God as distinct from nature, we simply mean nature itself and nature only, because our thought cannot transcend nature. When we speak of miracles we mean natural sequences, because these only are conceivable. Thus a marvelous and universal unity in naturalism is demonstrated.

But this assumes that none but the anti-supernaturalist knows his own thoughts, not a very modest assumption, to say the best of it. The issue now turns on the question whether the supernaturalists are not able to analyze their own consciousness, and thus know their own thoughts, or whether the natur-

alists only are competent to this, and whether these are also competent to know the thoughts of their opponents, and to inform the latter what they actually do think. Now, if we do not know what we think till they tell us, we cannot know what they tell us; for what they tell us must become our thought in order to be known by us, as we cannot know what we do not even think. And who is it, pray, that denies all thought to all the supernaturalists of the including world, its mightiest minds, such as Moses, Solomon, Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Descartes, Pascal, Leibnitz, Locke, Bacon, Newton? Who? Herbert Spencer, (and a few others of secondary and temporary distinction.) Let us doff our hats to the new monarch, in token that he is our head and brains; and that we only know this because he has kindly told us so.

If I know my own thoughts, I cannot help wondering how he knows that we supernaturalists have no conception of any supernatural operation? If he has no such conception he does not know what he is denying to us, and if he has, then we may have. If he and we both have it, then supernaturalism is demonstrated, according to his own philosphy, because this idea transcends natural experience, which

he says is the only source and measure of thought.

The reader will not suppose that we are so inconsiderate as to think for a moment that all this argumentation will have any effect on those who have made up their minds to scout all supernaturalism.

But we may hope it will be a pleasure if not a tonic to those who may read it, and who have not thus made up their minds. We add that though, on the Spencerian theory of evolution, the conception of supernaturalism proves its truth, we consider this only an *argumentum ad hominem*. Thought is not the proof and measure of objective reality.

CHAPTER XVII.

EMPIRICAL OBJECTIONS.

In concluding this subject, we wish to make an observation and answer some objections, to prevent misapprehension. The ideal which we have sketched both Theistic and Christian, is necessarily only in outline. It gives the essential spirit and principles of the Christian theory; but it leaves much unsaid, and much unexplained. This is a necessity because we are finite while the subject is infinite. Everything that is true must accord with the ideal presented. But let us not make the fatal mistake of assuming that we must be able to see this accordance. That does not follow. On the contrary, it must be expected often to pass beyond our comprehension in the details. Any other supposition is absurd, since we are finite. Difficulties, therefore, in nature and revelation are inevitable, now and forever. Problems, progressively solved, must introduce others to test and develope further power.

Whatever contradicts any truth or fact must be false, because truth is always self-consistent, else error and falsehood might be true, which refutes itself, being a contradiction in terms. Hence, if the great Conception which we have briefly expounded is true as a fact, it must be reconcilable with all experience. Yet it may be true, though we may not be able to show that it is actually so, or so reconciled. It is enough if we can show that it may be so reconciled. If any fact could be clearly shown to be absolutely incompatible with this Conception, this would be invalidated. But that is impossible, because we cannot know and compare all possible facts and connections and consequences; and hence we cannot know that in the end they will certainly conflict with this Conception.

We may, however, find facts from which a strong inductive inference may be drawn, that they do not accord with the existence of an infinitely perfect Being. But nearly all inductions, from their very nature, admit of being reversed, with more or less of probability. If it may be so in any of these cases, we are not justified in looking only in one direction. Besides any induction which accords with a priori necessity of so lofty an order as our Supreme Idea is infinitely preferable to an induction, however

strong, in favor of an opposite conclusion. In the light of these considerations, let us look at some of the facts which are judged as opposing the doctrine of the existence of an infinite supernatural Being.

It is alleged that the existence of evil and of natural contrivances, as a means to an end, indicate that the divine power or goodness is limited. If there is a Being of infinite goodness, why does He not secure perfect happiness to all his creation? And if He has infinite power, why does He not do this at once, and without the aid of means? We never use means for what we can effect by a simple volition. These are considerations which have perplexed the pious and nourished skepticism in all ages. They formed the staple of Job's discussions with his friends, or rather they formed the skeleton in the dark back-ground which leered upon his holy faith all through the period of his fearful trial. They have recently received a luminous exposition from the trained and gifted mind of John Stuart Mill.

It is to be conceded that induction from experience can never prove the existence of a Being of infinite perfection; because our knowledge must always be finite, and the created universe and all possible manifestations or the divine attributes must always be finite. On the basis of ex-

perience, therefore, we can never have an adequate reason for assuming the infinity of nature's Author, if it has an Author. This conclusion will be confirmed by the experience of evil and of the operation of general law, which secures good only after tedious and laborious processes, and by the perpetration of much misery.

But is it not possible to explain these and other such facts, as being consistent with the existence of an infinitely perfect Being? I think it is.

Suppose that a higher good is attainable by the operation of general law and the evils with which it is connected than in any other possible way. Then these are not marks of limitation, but of highest possible wisdom. To this it is replied that this vindicates the wisdom and the goodness, but not the power of God, and that omnipotence could achieve the good without any evil, and without means and contrivance.

This reasoning proceeds on a misconception of the meaning and nature of omnipotence. Omnipotence is not blind and irrational. It must be suffused with infinite wisdom and goodness. As good it must achieve the best possible ends. As wise it must know these ends, and the logical conditions of their attainment. These conditions it cannot disregard.

It cannot work contradictions. Men demand that it shall, and this is the source of all our skepticism on the subject. Men demand that God shall make a valley without hills, and "a stick without two ends," and because He cannot they exclaim about his impotence. Affecting to be wise, they become fools; oblivious of the first and simplest law of thought, that our reasoning must be consistent with itself, and that still less, if possible, are we entitled to require God to commit the folly of which we stand self-convicted.

In accordance with this fundamental error, Mr. Mill says that the difficulty must be either in the opposition of another being, as the devil, or in the nature of the materials, or in his inability to use them; and that in any case the limitation of his power is proved. On the contrary, I take the position that the difficulty lies in the nature of the materials, but that this does not disprove the divine omnipotence.

Whatever God creates must be a force, for whatever is, is force (for proof of this see ANALYTICAL PROCESSES, Book Second).

This force must be of some kind or peculiar nature.

According to its nature must be the forms of its operation.

This operation necessarily constitutes general laws, so that general laws are an absolute necessity from the essential nature of all existence. God can destroy them only by annihilating the universe; and then there will remain the necessary laws of his own nature.

Hence difficulties necessarily arise from the nature of his materials—difficulties which omnipotence cannot destroy without destroying the materials.

Their existence does not disprove omnipotence. Omnipotence is a power to achieve whatever does not involve a self-contradiction; and such contradiction is involved in the supposition that any power can remove these difficulties without destroying all things.

These forces will necessarily operate differently in different connections, for the same reason that, being the same, they will operate the same in the same connections.

Consequently, combination or contrivance in accordance with their nature and laws is the only way by which wise or good ends can be attained. Omnipotence and partipotence are here on a level. It is not a question of simple power, but of the wisdom of creation, and a wise and comprehensive following of the methods which the nature of things necessitates.

That infinite wisdom and goodness have presided over the fiat of creation and the processes of its development, we cannot prove from experience. Neither can we disprove it. It is possible, and so we leave it as the product of the Ideal, whose end is only partially attained as yet, but is always advancing, and destined to be perfectly satisfactory at last.

In probable explanation of the existence of evil as pain or suffering, we are entitled to the possible supposition that infinite wisdom saw that the creation of the universe on a plan which admits this to a certain extent is better than any conceivable system which should absolutely exclude it. This does not exalt the divine goodness at the expense of his power, as Mr. Mill affirms. It only supposes that Infinity cannot work self-contradictions, that He cannot create beings without qualities or forces; that He cannot make them be and not be at the same time, and cannot make each or any force act contrary to its intrinsic and total nature. Such a power as this would destroy all certainty and reality, and confound all thought and reasoning.

In prosecuting our effort at a possible reconciliation of the facts of experience with the reality of our Ideal Conception, we are also entitled to the supposition that the universe is constructed on the scheme

of intellectual and moral probation and progress, with liability to sin and suffering, and that this in the issue will bring good out of evil, and in spite of evil, and partly by its help will be productive of a felicity and nobility of character which were otherwise impossible, and which will more than compensate on the whole for any evil that may attend it. This supposition grows out of the Ideal, since the Infinite must be conceived as thus acting. It does not, therefore, impeach his omnipotence. It is self-contradictory to suppose that there can be certain mental and moral qualities without trial and temptation, and consequent liability to error and sin; and to achieve such prodigies as these does not belong to omnipotence.

We here call attention also to what we have already considered, that a capacity for pleasure is also of logical necessity a capacity for pain; and that where there is a violation of the law of pleasure, the law of pain necessarily operates. How far the latter may be made to contribute to the former in the eternal ages of the universe of God we are no adequate judges, and so cannot gainsay the supposition that the existing order, taken altogether and in all its connections, is the best possible system of things, the best even to omnipotence, combined with infinite wisdom an goodness.

It is puerile to mention the low forms of life in some tribes of men as an objection to the perfection of God. It is no better than to ask why God did not make us all Newtons? We might then ask why Newton was not made a Gabriel or Lucifer, and why these were not made indefinitely higher, and so on forever. It is reasonable that there should be grades, and it is absurd to suggest where these should begin or end, when the range is without limit, and all degrees are only relatively great or small.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INTUITION; OR, SUBJECTIVE INFLUENCE.

In these days there is a mighty cry: "Great is Intuition, or Insight." Give us this, they say, and we shall take a bee-line with lightning speed for all that is true and good. Then we can dispense with the syllogism and all the machinery of evidences and argumentation. This is the song of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Boston transcendentalists. We fervently join with them in the praise of intuition. But there are various forms of intuition. There is a logical and philosophical, as well as a poetic intuition; and there is a spiritual intuition which eyes the supernatural, as well as a sensible intuition, which discerns only "Nature."

It is to this higher intuition that we make our appeal, striving to develop it into nobler action and proportions by presenting to it the noblest of objects. We have made no reference to the miracles and testimony of past ages, though we consider that these

have a significance and authority. Our philosophy and argument are, we conceive, born directly of the loftiest and serenest insight, and only this can discern our Supreme Idea.

We also hold that this same intuition has a certain quality or faculty of voluntariness. Like those aquatic animals, it can at will surround itself with a cloud of inky blackness, so that it can neither see nor be seen. Every man, to a degree, is lord of his own intuition, which is almost as changeful as Proteus, and for similar reasons, and is often most blank relative to its own character. Men of equal powers may be unequal in their action. High faculty may be voluntarily unemployed. With truth before them, men of intuitive power are not necessitated to see and accept her. The final determination rests with them. They make their own right or wrong. Their preference controls their mental action and habit, and shapes and guides their perceptions. Their world is chiefly of their own creation, and their judgments respecting that world own the will of their subject for their master. We are thus responsible for our views, our doubts and our faith. Our own disposition and inclination, our own self-chosen or self-cultured bias, can always make the worse appear the better reason. Objective realities appear different as our subjective

state changes. Ideas take on the hues of our own minds, and without any variation things appear sable or sunbright, according as is the mind that contemplates them. We all remember how differently we have been affected by the same truths and the same events at different times and on different occasions in our lives. The outer object or the real truth of things is nothing to us unless we have the faculty of true insight. It is supremely from this cause that the glory and the truth of the great Christian doctrines are obscured to the minds of so many alike in the upper and the lower intellectual planes.

We know all this both from our own experience and from observation in every direction. We can never forget how obscure some of the most vital teachings of the New Testament appeared to us before we received that divine illumination and spiritual renovation which we call the new birth. In their experience of our skeptical friend, we have seen this truth exemplified in a more specific and striking form than usual, just as his conversion was effected by a more distinctly intellectual agency than usual. The claims of the Supreme Idea, which ultimately exercised a decisive influence upon him, he at first energetically repudiated. As he drew nearer in spirit to the Saviour, his opposition grew less intense, less

thorough, decided and confident, till at last he yielded to it as a reasonable ground for prayer and for a life in consonance with the Christian ideas. After he was converted, it became as clear as sunlight. All the obscurities and apparent errors of the Christian system disappeared, and the essential points of that system became as clear as the most familiar truths of his childhood. I had feared that there would be many things in our doctrinal system of first importance which he would hesitate to accept even after his conversion. But his new spiritual intelligence at once embraced every vital truth of the Christian economy. Intellect and heart were one—clarified, purified, exalted, happy.

The writers of the Bible sometimes express this idea with paradoxical energy. Such a sentence is that of Jesus to Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." A cultivated mind, little acquainted with Jesus, hearing this would perhaps imagine that Jesus meant to repress rational investigation, and to require a faith without evidence, and that therefore all his votaries are to be despised as mental addlings, whose faith is the measure of their lack of brains.

There has always been men who have looked upon

Christianity as a system of religion which requires belief without knowledge, which smiles on credence and frowns on intelligence, and who have, therefore, treated it and its adherents with neglect and contempt, as injurious to the development and progress of the best powers and interests of men. Their view of Christianity is partial and false, and prevents them from seeking and securing those blessings which Christ offers to all who receive him.

For the view they take they have a reason in the opinions and actions of many of the professed adherents of Christ, who do actually consider such passages as this to be an encouragement of faith at the expense of knowledge: and they think that the energy of intellectual inquiries should be systematically suppressed, or at least indulged only in very rigid subjection to the supposed demands of the faith.

We need not say that we consider this an utter perversion of the spirit of Christianity. Christ does, indeed, demand implicit faith and unquestioning faith, but not a blind faith. A blind faith has nothing to guide it in the right track, and to it error will be as welcome and as forceful as truth. Christ claims credence and allegiance on the ground that he is the light of the world; and that, therefore, all

ought to recognize his character as readily as they recognize the sunlight. It is on this account that Thomas ought not to have needed the sensible evidence which he sought, and that they are nobler who are able to believe without that evidence, because of their spiritual intuition.

Thomas had very little of this higher insight. He was not distinctively a skeptic through fertility of thought in wrong directions. On the contrary, he belonged to the positive and impulsive order of minds; of strong and generous feelings, but of sluggish intellect, working snail-like on the earth, not bird-like in the air. Hence the uncomprehended death of Jesus had destroyed his faith and all the power of the glorious truth which Jesus had taught, and the still grander spirit which Jesus had displayed. Thomas is the antipodes of John, who apparently never faltered in his faith in Jesus as the Christ, because of a deeper insight into his character and the spirit of his teachings.

Moral and spiritual truth is itself a light, and, therefore, it carries with it its own evidence to every right mind. It needs no voucher from either miracle or testimony, except to the blind. Only the blind ask for testimony, or other indirect evidence that the sun shines. It is not for this sane

men use burning glasses. Hence Paul spoke of manifesting the truth to every man's conscience by the simple preaching or proclamation of it, without the aid of miracles; affirming that if the Gospel is hid to any, it is because they are blinded by the god of this world, while believers are convinced, not because of sensible evidences, but because God has shone into their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, just as he commanded light to shine out of darkness. Hence, whoever hears the Gospel, is commanded to receive it on pain of damnation. They are not exempt from obligation to believe, till they have had time to examine the miracles and prophesies in proof of the Gospel. The Gospel is its own proof; and whoever refuses to embrace it, has shut his heart against the light of heaven. He is a moral and spiritual imbecile; and however he may boast his "science" and his "culture," the highest science and culture are not his. He lacks the loftiest form of intuition and insight.

Superiority of mind is disclosed by being the first to discover great truths and general laws, and next by the most ready comprehension of them when expounded or stated. Some of the great mathematical

minds have read right through large portions of Euclid, comprehending the problems and theorems at a glance without any help from the demonstrations furnished in the book; while others have found the answers to the former only by a laborious study of the latter; and there are still others who cannot understand even the latter. Here the last class are accounted the dullest, and the first the brightest. This standard is reversed by many in judging of talent in regard to religion. Those who confess that they can discern and understand nothing, claim on that very ground to be considered the ablest and wisest; a claim which is about as rational as if the blind and deaf should claim to know more than others because they can neither see nor hear. The developed and disciplined intellect is marked by a positive power, not merely or chiefly by a negative impotency. For a man to confess that everything to him is dark, is merely a confession of his blindness, not a proof that there is no light to any other man.

It is by a superior exhibition of this positive power that the kings of science have won their crowns. Copernicus first conceived the theory of the solar system which takes his name, and the genius which conceived it knew how to unfold the proofs to his own satisfaction; but inferior minds could not so

easily comprehend either the theory or its proofs, and it required a generation or two before what he saw so clearly and proved so well, was generally accepted. Newton's discovery and proof of the law of gravitation exemplifies in like manner the action of genius compared with inferior minds. In all cases the palm of honor is awarded to the exhibition of positive power. Negatives prove nothing except in capacity and moral debasement, and the lower a man descends the more unconscious is he of his degradation. Simon Magus thought the apostolic powers in conferring the Holy Ghost only a higher art than his own, and complacently offered money to obtain it. The moral conception of the case had not dawned on his mind. However gifted in some respects, he was evidently far inferior in the highest of all qualities, moral intuition and earnestness, to those around him who were rejoicing in the moral and spiritual salvation by Christ, and he knew not that he was blind while they beheld the light. A Hindoo physician, a man of culture, after the style of his country, undertook, for the peace of his conscience, a lengthy pilgrimage, marking and measuring his progress by the lengths of his body on the ground. His weary toil excited the attention and pity of a missionary, who exhibited to him a picture

of Jesus on the cross, and explained the Gospel. Then the man arose, saying that Jesus was the Saviour he wanted, and his heart received the believer's peace and joy. Did not this instantaneous faith exhibit a far keener and loftier power of moral perception and earnestness than if for his conviction he had required a course of reading on the miracles and prophesies, and all the tedious array of historic and critical evidences? All rationalism will answer yes. Blessed are they who, though they have not seen all these proofs, have believed and known the truth as it is in Jesus. It is thus that many, who are limited in literary and scientific and philosophical attainments, may exercise a grade of power which in dignity and worth far transcends the genius of Spencer and Darwin, and all their anti-Christian followers.

BOOK SECOND.

SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCE.

BOOK SECOND.—THE EXPERIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

A PROPOSED ARGUMENT FROM RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

If the Supernatural Ideal is true it will, when believed and acted on, be productive of a peculiar life and experience in verification of its truth. We have seen this exemplified in the case of our skeptical friend. We propose now to extend this idea, and from a wide induction form an argument which shall be strictly scientific, based on the Christian Consciousness or Experience. This will be an argument which is more on a level with the average mind, and will appeal to it with greater force than that on the Supernatural Ideal or the Supreme Idea.

Those who are true to their highest conceptions will attain a corresponding experience. Experience is the inevitable attendant on thought and action;

and as determined by them it takes from them its character. There is therefore a natural experience which arises from Christian faith. But according to the Scriptures there is also a supernatural power and experience wrought in all who truly give themselves up to Christ. Whether this is so is a question which is to be determined by consciousness and testimony and critical observation. Then whether we can make any legitimate use of the facts thus ascertained in support of the supernatural claims of Christianity, is a question for philosophical consideration.

The latter question has never been seriously considered. Among themselves and in popular discourse Christians have often drawn an effective argument from a special spiritual experience. Among "the people called Methodists" especially, this has been a frequent appeal of great power in their addresses to the unconverted. Living or dying, this testimony of an earnest and a foretaste of heaven, consistently supported, cannot fail to have great force in attracting the people to religion.

Very many people who adopt the Christian creed know nothing of such an experience, and they deny that there is any such in this world, or that it is for any but a very few of the most exalted saints. They look upon these alleged experiences as examples of enthu-

siasm or fanaticism; and they consider that these, so far from being an argument in favor of religion, are hindrances to its success.

Vast numbers, however, of the best and ablest men of the church have held to the existence of a distinctively Christian experience. They hold that religion is a life, and that this life must have its internal as well as its external manifestations. This is indisputable. Exactly how this is manifested, whether it is purely natural or whether it is also supernatural, and if the latter, how and by what tokens it is to be discriminated from what is merely natural, are questions which require attention. Thoughtful Christians have, no doubt, often had their attention arrested by this question. They have seen nature in their religious experience, and they have seen God; but, perhaps, they could go no further. They could not delineate the two in clear discrimation from each other; much less could they see how to bring their supernatural experiences forth into indisputable recognition and erect upon them an argument for religion which shall be as regular and as clearly scientific as any of the recognized inductions of physical and social science. They have therefore been content to affirm the consciousness of a supernatural experience for their own comfort and spiritual incitement,

and for the spiritual benefit of all who were prepared to accept their testimony. This is the history of the more spiritual part of the Christian church on this subject. Here the ablest divines and their humblest hearers or readers have been apparently on a level. A scientific argument on the basis of experience has never been developed, nor, so far as I am aware, has it ever been attempted.

On the contrary, there is even yet a prevalent assumption that such an argument is impossible, and that to attempt it would be unwise because futile. In some minds there is a prejudice against applying the rigid methods of science to religion, as if religion itself would be debased by being found in alliance with science, and supported by science. The scientific unbelievers, on the other hand, smile at the idea of a scientific argument based on a special and supernatural experience, and they expect it will work just as the Greek fire would operate among the Greeks themselves, if it were handled by apes.

As to the fact of the supernatural experience, I shall affirm nothing but what is uniformly affirmed by all denominations of Christian people, whether Papal or Protestant—nothing but what is attested as a verified doctrine in all sections of the common Church, which receives the Bible as a supernatural revelation.

We are fighting the battle of Christian faith, and therefore we stand on the common foundation, and use no weapons which are not approved by the entire Christian fraternity as believers in the supernaturalism of the Scriptures. With this limitation, or rather, to view it on the other side, on this broad foundation, I am of the opinion that it is possible, on the basis of an attested uniform Christian experience, to construct an argument of the most scientific character, and the most cogent force.

There is surely no obvious and intrinsic absurdity in such an opinion; and an honest attempt to prove it ought not to be condemned in advance. The unbelieving philosopher, if he is a philosopher indeed, can do no less than to listen respectfully and with a spirit of serious inquiry, to the attested experience of so vast a number of witnesses as those which compose the living forces of the entire Christian church of all civilized ages and countries, comprising a very vast proportion of the most gifted, the most cultured, and the most eminent in moral and spiritual attainments in the world, as well as the simple and unsophisticated people who have verified the doctrine of the universal church.

Nor ought we to be daunted by the denial of all supernatural experience with which unbelievers will

endeavor to forestal our argument. Of course, such experience is unknown to them, just because they are unbelievers who do not conform to the conditions on the fulfilment of which the experience ensues. It is implied in our doctrine and argument, that they are strangers to the alleged spiritual and supernatural experience. They are entitled to speak for themselves, but not for believers. On the other hand, believers also may speak for themselves, which they do, and they do nothing more, and their testimony is positive and uniform, as we shall show; and from this uniformity of testimony of vast extent and duration, and including an innumerable multitude of witnesses of every grade of talent and culture, and from every walk of society, we shall show that there is a strong scientific foundation for the inference that their view is true.

Those who have no such experience, whether infidels or not, cannot, of course, anticipate any success to such an effort. But, on the other hand their want of such an experience is no proof that it is impossible or that nobody else is the subject of it. They are to be counted out as of only negative force. I shall not have their sympathy nor their testimony, that is all.

The experience of which I speak must follow a

uniform law of acquisition and retention and loss, in order that it may be calculated and anticipated, and its causal connections determined. Consequently no one must be the subject of this experience, except those who have fulfilled or conformed to this law, while all who do conform to the law must be its subject. This just rule clears our track of all merely nominal and faithless Christians who disregard the Christian law, or who observe it so imperfectly, that the Christian consciousness cannot, according to Scripture, be unequivocally developed. This law must also at the same time be shown to be, not a natural, but a supernatural law, by its deviations from the known natural order on the topic considered.

CHAPTER II.

CAUTIONS AND DISTINCTIONS.

I ALLOW that we should be careful not to make a parade of science in support of religion. But it is quite a fashion now to make a parade of science in support of irreligion; and here it is often the parade which wields the chief influence with some people and a little parade of science on the other side of the question may be necessary to convince that class that anything can be said on this side.

I would not have any one suppose that I mean to insinuate, by anything I have said, that the method by which Christianity has been usually supported by its best advocates is not truly scientific. It is, and has always been so, though not so denominated. Religion has been put beyond the pale of science; and in these days the most elaborate efforts of some philosophers are directed toward the perpetual exclusion of religion from the rank of a science. Even divines have generally acquiessed in this, and so

such phrases "as science and religion," with the implication that the latter is not included in the former, show that this exclusion of religion from the rank of science is stamped upon our language.

A distinction is to be made between the science of religion and the practice of religion, a distinction of much importance every way. The science of religion is the exposition and defense of its principles and prescribed methods; while the practice of religion comprises all thought and action in accordance with these principles and methods. When the word religion is used, as it generally is, to designate the practice of it in our life and worship, it does not denote a science; and it is this use of the word that has facilitated the entire exclusion of religion from the acknowledged circle of the sciences. But it would be just as reasonable to exclude physiology or psychology from the circle of the sciences; for here there is the same distinction between the practice and the science. In our physical and mental life we exemplify the principles of physiology and psychology, while the sciences are the knowledge and the exposition of these principles. In the science of the Christian religion we reckon systematic theology, pastoral theology, homiletics, the principles of exegesis, the evidences, internal and external.

These should all be scientific, and so far as they are of value, they are so. In their development and exposition we follow the same methods of investigation that are followed in the physical sciences—induction aided by deduction wherever this is possible. There are no methods of reasoning and investigation other than these: no other is possible anywhere. Nowhere in all the range of the acknowledged sciences has the method of induction been more rigorously applied and more beautifully exemplified than in the science of the Christian religion, in all its departments. It would be a great pleasure to show this with some detail, but I forbear now, though I may do it some time.

We ought also to notice and bear in mind the distinction between conscious and unconscious science, or between reflective and unreflective or spontaneous science. The beginning of what is called science is not the beginning of the scientific process. The latter is coeval with intelligence. Men were logicians before Aristotle analyzed the logical process, and they practised induction before Bacon conceived his *Novum Organum*. Men do both to-day with almost perfect accuracy and reach just conclusions, though it never occurs to them that they are exmplifying the methods of scienc ,

and while they know nothing whatever of science. I cannot better illustrate this than by quoting from Macauley's essay on Bacon the following passage:

"A plain man finds his stomach out of order. He never heard Lord Bacon's name. But he proceeds in the strictest conformity with the rules laid down in the second book of the "Novum Organum", and satisfies himself that minced pies have done the mischief. 'I ate minced pies on Monday and Wednesday, and I was kept awake by indigestion all night.' This is the *comparentia ad intellectum instantiarum convenientium.* 'I did not eat any on Tuesday and Friday, and I was quite well.' This is the *comparentia instantiarum in proximo quæ natura data privantur.* 'I ate very sparingly of them on Sunday, and was very slightly indisposed in the evening. But on Christmas day I almost dined on them, and was so ill that I was in some danger.' This is the *comparentia instantiarum secundum magis et minus.* 'It cannot have been the brandy which I took with them, for I have drunk brandy daily for years, without being the worse for it.' This is the *rejectio naturarum.* Our invalid then proceeds to what is termed by Bacon the Vindemiatio, and pronounces that mince pies do not agree with him."

In religion there is a grand scope for this spon-

taneous science. Here every one has to judge for himself, and is held responsible for his choice. He must choose right, or he must be condemned. But he cannot investigate all the evidences. Not one in a million is competent to this. The Gospel demands acceptance from all on its first presentation. The Scriptures therefore assume that they carry their own evidence with them, either in themselves or in the living Church which propagates them, or in both ways. There must be a reason which all can understand and appreciate, though they may not be able to expound and elucidate it; and which will bear investigation, and prove its claim to be truly scientific. This is the argument from the experience of the Church verifying the promises of the Bible.

CHAPTER III.

SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

MODERN science is characterized by beginning its operations with experience, and sticking well to it. This it sifts and analyzes, and carefully determines its factors and elements, and its causal connections. Then it accepts it without any further question, and its logical implications, of course go with it.

By experience it discovers a regular and orderly connection of things, which constitute the world or the universe. By the observed uniformity of things, in the order of their succession, it determines relative causes and effects, and is able to anticipate certain coming events. Any event which uniformly follows another is pronounced to be caused by that other, and so from the knowledge of either we may generally or always predict the other.

This is the way the human mind always reasons in every stage of its development. The burnt child infers that the painful sensation which he feels is

caused by the connection of his hand with the flame; and having seen certain effects of a falling body, he will anticipate them on any like occasion. The savage reasons on this principle as confidently and as intelligently within his range as the philosopher does within his broader range. Science is thus the exercise of our natural powers of observation and inference, and the same method; only this method is enlarged and purified and guarded against aberrations, to which ignorant and undisciplined minds are exposed.

But all experience or observation raises questions which transcend experience. In every stage of development the human mind spontaneously and necessarily asks the question, "whence come these phenomena of our experience, and why do they act so and so, and maintain their relations to each other as found in our experience?" In other words, we inquire for a cause of all these phenomena. We affirm or assume that our experience is not the ultimatum of thought and existence, that implies a force of which these phenomena are manifestations.

A very few men in modern times, like Mr. Comte and John Stuart Mill, have endeavored to quash these questions as illegitimate and unmeaning. They have demanded that all our inquiries shall stop with

experience and be content with it. They might as well demand that the birdling shall be content in its shell or that the transformed caterpiller shall be content with its chrysalis form and condition. Neither Comte nor Mill were able to so restrict their own minds, as seen in Comte's religious appendix to his philosophy, and in Mill's "Essays on Religion." Accordingly, this restriction finds small sanction among the scientists of the age. Nearly all physical investigators affirm, and all assume, that all known things or phenomena imply a force of which they are the effects and manifestations. This is incorporated by Mr. Spencer into the theory of evolution as one of its fundamental elements.

Here we call attention to an unrecognized logical consequence of the method of determining natural causes. It is this: If known uniformity is proof of a natural cause, then known violation of uniformity is proof of a cause which is not natural or which is supernatural. Observe, we do not here affirm any known violation of the law of uniformity, but only that as this law determines for us what is the natural cause of any event, it follows by strict logical necessity that if we should find any case of an event which occurs to our certain knowledge contrary to the known order of events we should have proof that it

does not occur by the force of nature, and therefore, that it is the effect of a supernatural force. This is part of the essential principle of modern science, a part, however, which it neglects, because it properly belongs to the theological science; but that is no reason why other sciences should deny it, as it only shows their incomprehension of their own essential principle. If therefore we do find a class of phenomena which do not conform to natural law we shall on this principle be compelled to assign to them a supernatural cause.

So far as it goes, this brief statement forms an exposition of the main principles and method of modern science, and of the philosophy which most clearly allies itself with physical science, together with its converse logical implication. With this method, we have no quarrel. It is the method to which the Church must conform, and to which we believe, it has always conformed in the study and support of the Christian religion, and that by this it is a science.

Now, if in perfect conformity with this method we can show an experience based on Scripture which cannot be explained except by the induction of a supernatural cause, and of the supernatural origin and authority of the Scriptures, we shall furnish a scientific proof of these doctrines, and bring the Christian

Evidences within the pale of science. This, we think, can be easily done, without recurrence to the alleged historical miracles.

CHAPTER IV.

NATURAL LAW OF FAITH.

LIKE every thing else faith has many laws. But it is not our object to expound all these, but only one of them.

This one is the law of its influence or its law as a cause, and even this we propose here to consider only partially and so far as it relates directly to our argument as a contrast to the Christian law of faith.

Natural faith affects the mind in which it operates according to the nature of the idea believed. Pleasant or unpleasant ideas will be productive of feelings corresponding with them; and thus the gloom or the brightness of our daily life, is the effect of our dominant daily beliefs.

All belief naturally helps to fulfill itself. Whoever expects to fail in business or any special enterprise, will be likely to do so. The belief will probably engender a style and course of conduct, which makes

failure inevitable. Napoleon's faith in his predestinated successes, and Wallenstein's favorable prognostications of the stars, inspired cheer and courage and effective energy of intellect and will, into both themselves and their adherents. It was because in the darkest hour of her history, Fabius did not despair of the Republic that he became her military saviour.

The power of a belief does not depend on the truth of the thought or sentiment believed. It belongs equally to faiths that are founded on truth and error. This is a necessity because the effect is subjective, and is the effect of the faith as such. It has always the same effect as if it were true, because it is received and acted on as true. An erroneous belief can kill and make alive. It may affect the spirits so as to destroy vitality, or restore it when apparently fled. It has alternately infused cowardice and courage into armies. The prisoner has been made happy in his cell by a false assurance of a coming pardon, while a false alarm has brought misery and ruin to its victims.

But faith does not always fulfill itself. History has no longer or sadder chapter than that on the vanity of human hopes and expectations; while the happy or the comical disappointments of dark forebodings form a supplement of corresponding propor-

tions. The fulfillment of a belief depends on its basis in fact, on its subject and the connections of events; so that its fulfillment is as uncertain and as variable as human temperaments and circumstances; and this is the only law of their fulfillment.

No faith, true or false, always naturallg produces the effect it seeks or expects.

Everywhere and in every direction we find the faith of men doomed to disappointment, and their forebodings are often happily unfilled. There is in the result of the recognized natural faiths no uniformity. He who expects a crown finds a poniard or a scaffold or a dungeon. The invalid dies in the belief that he is convalescent; while the hypochondriac, the victim of a thousand anticipated mortal ills, lives on in spite of all, and perhaps by their help.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN LAW OF FAITH.

RELIGION, like science, begins with experience. It cannot begin without this nor with anything else than this. We can have nothing and can know nothing which is not an experience. All supposed revelations of God and all communications of his grace must come to us in the form of experience, and this must, therefore, be at the foundation of religion, as well as of science. Hence the religion of the Bible has always made much of experience; and it is full of the experiences of the saints, and of sinners too. The same is true of the more spiritual portion of the modern Church. It affirms that all Christians are the subjects of a special and peculiar experience, and by this, therefore, it in a measure judges them. At all events, it always in some way builds on experience as its primary synthetical foundation.

It is by experience that the Scriptures are known,

for the Bible as a book is an object of sense, uniform, and verifiable, and all may know it in like natural conditions.

By experience, sensible and uniform and verifiable in its primary form, the contents or the teachings of the Scriptures are known. It is only in the interpretation of these contents that differences begin, and here there are grand salient points of universal agreement. It is thus agreed that they teach that the sinner must repent as a condition of pardon, that if he repent and turn to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God shall be shed abroad in his heart as a token of mercy, and he shall also receive the power of a new and holy life.

By experience we discover a regular and uniform connection between the fulfilment of the requisitions and the fulfilment of the promises. "Uncontradicted experience" of uniformity of connection in the order of time between phenomena is the highest evidence that Mill, Spencer or Bain can conceive of causal connection. This evidence we have in proof of the causal connection between repentance and faith and a peculiar spiritual experience and power which the prayer of faith sought in accordance with the promise of Scripture. The book of the Acts of the Apostles gives numerous examples of this connection as the law of spiritual life.

But this analysis is not ultimate, and this connection implies an ulterior cause. The faith in question looks beyond itself to God as the operator or cause of the solicited new experience. It does this in conformity with the Bible, which affirms that God always does this work in answer to such faith and prayer. By the uniformity of the verification of this declaration of the Bible contrary to the law of natural faith we have a scientific proof that the Bible is true, that the result is the effect of our faith only secondarily, and of God's supernatural power really and ultimately.

If the prayer of faith itself is the exclusive and ultimate cause of the new experience, then this prayer is an error. It assumes that itself is not the only cause, that it is only one of the necessary antecedents, and that the supernatural operation or volition of God is another of these antecedents. To ascribe the result to only one of these antecedents is to say that praying faith is a delusion and yet that it is mighty to save. Thus the weakness of error is made the mightiest and the most marvelous of all known moral forces. This is suicidal.

We have seen that the natural law of faith does not secure a uniform fulfilment of the faith, and that the failures are extremely numerous, so numerous that we

hardly ever prognosticate a man's success or defeat merely on the strength of his faith. But this is just what Christianity does. It is to faith pure and simple that salvation and a new life are offered, and we predict the latter as a certain and uniform consequence of the former. The publican going down to his house justified is the type of all without exception. All temperaments, all ages, and all degrees of culture, in all times and climes, without a single unmistakable exception, have experienced in some degree a new joy and a new life as the result of such a prayer. This surely cannot be explained by any known natural law. It must be referred to a supernatural power as its cause.

Will it be argued that this uniformity is the operation of a psychological law, according to which repentance of sin and faith in God's mercy necessarily generate happiness and moral power? That there is such a psychological law is beyond question. But it is a law of partial and limited operation and force, according as is the moral power and character of the individual. The purpose and expectation to live a better life does not always secure it, and repentance without faith in Christ, often calls for penance and gives no comfort whatever, but fills the mind with gloomy and depressing fears. This has

been the bitter experience of very many who have afterward become the happy subjects of saving grace. They have again and again resolved and hoped to be better, but they have still found that they remained substantially unchanged; till finally, looking unto Jesus, they have become the subjects of new tastes, new motives, hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, aversions and attachments, and new power over temptation

It is true that Christians often fail, that their prayers and efforts and hopes are often partially unavailing against their besetting sins. But I have not said that they can be made perfect in a moment, or that prayer for this or that, for any and everything, is answered at once. I have said that men uniformly become the subject of a new experience and a new life, though repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, (which may yet leave much to be done.) This, I repeat, is the uncontradicted experience of the Church, and the teachings of the Scriptures; and we argue that the uniformity of this experience, verifying the promises of Scripture, is a scientific guarantee of the truth of Scripture declarations, that the cause of this change in the penitent believer, is the supernatural agency of the Spirit of God. The Bible being found to be

true, in its declaration of the uniform connection of repentance and faith with the new life, we have every reason for believing it to be true in its declarration, that the cause of the new life is the supernatural agency of God.

Now as we find that repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, exercised in praye for a new spiritual experience and power, are uniformly followed by this solicited experience and power, philosophy and science are stultified and confounded, unless the experience is a supernatural answer to the prayer; because the experience is conditioned upon the prayer in the faith of this supernatural agency, as without this faith the prayer would not be offered, and so there would be neither prayer nor expectancy, and no such result. If the result is merely a natural effect of the faith and prayer, it is the result of error and superstition, of mental imbecility and obliquity. Thus ignorance is not only the mother of devotion, but of all blessed and most exalted energies and susceptibilities and sympathies. If this is true, then philosophy and science are the enemies of all good, for they tend to make this good impossible.

Besides, moral science always affirms that goodness and happiness go with truth and right; while

on this theory of naturalism they do not, but the contrary.

Further, the breadth of this induction is absolutely overwhelming. Hardly any of the inductions of physical science, perhaps not one, have so wide a support in the multitude of instances. If I questioned the accuracy of Kepler's three laws, I should be called presumptuous. Yet not more, perhaps than five or ten minds, if so many, have verified his calculations; while millions on millions of every age and clime, and from every strata of society, and every degree of ability and culture have testified to the verification of this experience as the result of believing prayer. We find this verified in China, Japan, India, Africa, Polynesia and elsewhere just the same as in Great Britain, or America, and in all cases it exactly answers to the experience of the apostles and their contemporaries. This experience in every case, is the verification of the truth and power of the promise and belief of supernatural agency in an answer to such faith and prayer.

It has been objected to the primitive miracle argument, that the evidence being limited to an unscientific age and people, it is invalidated for our age; and that besides, it does not fulfill one of the demands of modern science, which requires that

the experience shall be open to all, and be verifiable by all. This objection is here invalid and its condition is fulfilled in the experience of which we have spoken. Wherever God has been sought in the prescribed method, He has been found; and this test is open to all and enjoined on all. Here God says, "try me and prove me, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing."

There are various degrees of assurance in regard to this verification. Some persons are dim and dubious in their repentance and faith and in their experience of God's mercy and the power and comfort of his grace; while others are very pronounced in both. But we fearlessly challenge the unbelieving world to produce a single indubitable case of penitence and believing prayer without any effect in the direction sought. We have never known or heard of such a case. The uniformity of the connection appears to be perfect.

In concluding this chapter I will notice two objections that may be raised to the argument of experience.

Some may say that they have sought in vain for this experience, and have faithfully complied with the alleged conditions. Their failure is not decisive. Notwithstanding their assurance, it is possible that

they have not fulfilled the conditions; and the value of their assertion is reduced to an infinitesimal fraction in view of the number and character of the witnesses to the verification of the truth of the promise; and it is utterly nullified when we remember that countless numbers who once thought as they do have found a better experience subsequently and witnessed on the other side.

Some have declared that they have had the experience, and that it is illusory. But how do they know that the experience of others is illusory? How much is their opinion worth against the opposite testimony? Besides, myriads have said this, who have afterward testified to the genuine experience. These entirely invalidate those. These are positive, those negative.

Now let the reader compare this law of uniformity with the known law of natural faith. We know that natural faith or faith in natural events or any faith other than this we are advocating does not always fulfill itself. Now if the Christian faith of which we speak were sometimes fulfilled but generally not fulfilled, it would be just like the law of natural faith, which is fulfilled only so far as it sets in operation certain known natural forces. But it differs from that law of natural faith in its uniformity, and with-

out our being able to show any natural connection between the faith and its consequence; and then if we could show such a natural consequence of faith, we should show that nature operates in favor of error and superstition by fulfilling their expections and achieving for them a higher end than science and philosophy ever achieve for their most distinguished votaries. We think, therefore, true science cannot reject our conclusion, that we have a sufficiently wide and sound induction in support of Christian supernaturalism as attested in the experience of the Church.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARACTERISTIC ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

THE experience of which we speak needs to be so far defined or described that it may be clearly understood, and also recognized as in the main an integral part of the faith of all Christian bodies. We will therefore give the elements and conditions of this experience, but as briefly as is consistent with clearness and requisite emphasis.

One of these elements or phases of the distinctive Christian consciousness is that of "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the atonement." Acting on our intelligence in concurrence with the Word the Holy Spirit has convinced the soul of sin so that the soul perceives that it is under the just and holy condemnation of God. This consciousness of sin and ill desert is a condition of the first step toward conversion. The moment the soul gives itself to God and exercises faith in the atonement of Christ, this feel-

ing is removed, and the soul is like one relieved of a burden, just as Bunyan's pilgrim lost his burden at the cross and then went on his way rejoicing. Accordingly, a joyous and exhilarated feeling is the usual accompaniment of this change; and sometimes this feeling is of a very pleasant and exalted nature, though its fervor after a while may subside.

A decided change for the better in our moral and spiritual tastes and inclinations, and also in our moral and spiritual perceptions, is a characteristic of this change. Vanities and follies which were once dearer than life have lost all their charms. Our pleasures and our ambitions are of a different and nobler order. We are conscious of a truly filial feeling toward God. We love Him, while before we only reverenced or feared Him. He has become to us supremely and infinitely lovely. His word too has undergone a great illumination, and has taken on a strange charm, while many of its previous obscurities have utterly vanished. The epistles, especially, which before were dull and unmeaning, are clear as the light and sweet as honey. Worship has become an appropriation of food and sweetness to the soul instead of a mere bodily exercise which profiteth little. The soul has suddenly acquired a strong affinity for Christian people of

spiritual tastes and conversation ; and so the Church as the organic kingdom of Christ and of righteousness has assumed a new aspect, and the convert wishes to be identified with it and to foster it. These holy tastes carry with them a holy power, so that known sins are abandoned, and sometimes even the temptation to them departs.

Indeed, the prime feature of this new life, is a peculiar and spiritual power, which enables its subject to live in conscious and evident victory over sin to which he had been a victim. Though neither innocent propensity to sin, nor sinful disposition may be wholly removed, they are put under the dominion of the will, so far that they may not be able to find any voluntary expression, except through ignorance and misapprehension of their nature. In accordance with this, Mr. Wesley writes: "An immediate and constant fruit of this faith, whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no, not for an hour, is power over sin; power over outward sin of every kind, over every evil word and work; over inward sin," so that vain and sinful thoughts and feelings shall not be cherished, and be regnant in the breast, and if the faith is strong enough, they may be utterly eradicated at once.

I shall make this suffice for a description of the essential elements of the change; and I must add that these elements will exist in vastly different degrees of development in different persons; and with growth and declension in religion, they will vary in this respect in the same persons; and in some persons the religious element may be pure and unalloyed, the heart being entirely sanctified by the grace of God.

It will appear from the short account of it which I have given, that this experienece is not simply an emotion, or sensation. It is an experience which is commensurate with the conscious exercise of all our faculties. It is a power of holy action, of holy endurance, and of spiritual intuition; and it may exist and powerfully operate in these forms, without much or any distinctive feeling otherwise; and in the practical and healthful operation of the spiritual life, it transmutes feeling into some form of effective force and action, instead of allowing the life's force to escape as mere unused emotion, and unusable, like equally diffused heat. It is very possible and by no means uncommon to cultivate emotion for its own sake, as a luxury enjoyed and expended without any action or effort in the exertion of strength for some good end. This is spirit-

ual dissipation, and injurious to the spiritual life. But some people often make such feelings the mea-s ure of religion, and imagine that if they can only excite them to a lofty pitch, they attain a very desirable end. These feelings may wax and wane without any necessary change in the character. Yet they have a function to perform. They show us what a luxury and felicity religion may become. They cheer us in toil and temptation. They may serve as a charm to the unconverted, who see the evidence of our joy. But above all, they are a force which by assimilation may be converted into working power; and this should be the aim and result at all times.

The foregoing very brief synopsis of the phenomena of the spiritual or Christian life and experience, is written from the Methodist stand point. We will now give one from a Unitarian stand-point; and this shall be given more fully, because, as this body of Christians is supposed to be less supernaturalistic than Trinitarians, if they affirm the fact, and the methods and conditions of the experience on which we have based our argument, much more are these affirmed by the Trinitarians; and we are thus seen to base our argument, not on a disputed point in theology, but on a fact and experience affirmed by

all parties in the Christian church. We will quote from an eloquent and excellent work, by E. H. Sears, on "Regeneration," and published by the Unitarian Association, at whose request it was also written. It is therefore as good authority as anything can be for the Unitarian denomination.

"Regeneration implies three things: First, a clearing away of all hereditary corruption; secondly, a restoration of the natural powers and affections to their appropriate service, or changing their inclination from self, and make them incline toward God, and toward his angels. It is obvious, however, that the divine work is accomplished in an order exactly the reverse of the one now stated." For the first ground of our regeneration is the spiritual nature, the immanence of the Divine Spirit in the soul. Its commencing dawn is the coming on of that light, until God shines within like another sun, diffusing warmth and radiance through our whole nature, and drawing us toward himself in the bonds of an all-attractive love. Then God becomes the prevailing force within us, and he bends our natural powers toward himself and draws them all into his service. No one is *regenerated* unless he comes to something more than "indulging a hope," or so long as the land of promise lies off in the dis-

tance, and is not a present possession and fruition. The new man is not one who has got some mystic title-deed to the heavenly country hereafter. He is the man whose foot already is planted on its ground, and who breathes its fragrance; into whose soul heaven has passed and is passing now; for the change of death is merely external; it only removes our fleshly coverings. It does not remove us, it only takes off a veil. Having chosen the right, "heaven draws around his spirit and folds him in; he breathes its airs; he is filled with its harmonies; he hears in his own moral nature its chimes hardly mellowed by distance, he holds fellowship with its shining ones."

If any one should object that it is not given to man here on earth to pass into these high spiritual frames, or pitch his tent on this mountain of golden peace, we simply take issue on the fact.

The new man is indicated by the new motives whence all his actions flow. Not until the spirit abiding within has melted the soul beneath the glow of the divine charms, not until the angel band of heavenly affections comes in, and the gang of selfish lusts goes out, do old things pass away and all things become new. Then begins the highest motive power, which is *love*. Now the soul hungers and

thirsts after righteousness, as for daily bread and living waters. Now we obey the commandments because we love them, and it is our meat and drink to do the will of the Father."

"The regenerate state is again characterized by a new kind of worship, God is revealed, as never before, the light and joy of our whole being. He sees nothing in us now that he does not love, for he sees his own work, and *he* calls it good. He glows within us as our life and peace. Our worship is love communing with love; the sons of God shouting for joy, their worship jubilant and spontaneous as the song of the summer bird on the airs of morning.

"Last of all the regenerate state is characterized by a new morality. Works are filled and vitalized by that angelic benevolence which is not complete until clothed and ultimated in action.

"Works are to the soul what utterance is to genius, whose necessity is, I must speak, or else I die; and whose glorious conceptions lie on the soul like a burden, and flood it with a beauty which it cannot bear, until these conceptions are born into the actual worth, and embodied in the canvas, the marble or the epic song. So is it with the man created anew in Christ and inspired with heavenly sentiments.

"Ideas of goodness, beneficence, justice, truth, always rolling in upon the soul when warmed with the supremely good and fair, always seeking on earth their embodiment and resting place, leaves us no peace unless we give them shape in outward things, and carve the substance of this world into their own bright and heavenly image." So much for the characteristics of regeneration.

Mr. Sears explains in the next chapter that this great change is conditioned on our choice of God and the right as our supreme portion and pursuit. It is not necessary to quote in proof of this. It is however to be considered that choice is impossible without faith or trust in respect to the moral nature and issue of such choice, and so faith is as necessary a condition as the choice. Mr. Sears does not over-look this, and therefore in a subsequent chapter he says: "The faith in Christ that saves is not so much the result of intellection as a perception of his moral grandeur and Divinity, adequate to our necessities and adopted to fill the chasm in our natures. Then we fly to him with the swift alacrity of a child that seeks a lost parent, and our natures are tender and pliable beneath his plastic hand. Faith in Christ is not a mere belief in the historical advent, but in the living Christ that ever comes from

the heavens as the Comforter and Redeemer of souls.

"Such was the faith for which Paul reasoned so earnestly; not a faith which should entitle the believer to a share in some reserved fund of foreign merit, but bring him into living relations to a Divine Mediator, so that his heart should be swept all the while with renewing gales and have a righteousness imparted to him every hour. Paul himself had a signal experience of this influence, melting the adamant of Jewish bigotry, and making the Pharisee humble as a child. Hence his great topic is faith in Christ as the essential (condition) of inward life and power; the essential (condition) of that regenerating influence which should draw man to God, and so restore human nature and the Divine nature to their primal harmonies."

Hence faith or trust, as implying choice, may be taken by us as it was by Paul, to represent the sum of the conditions on which the experience under consideration depends.

As our experience of the power of faith in Christ is not confined to the inner consciousness of each individual; and as it necessarily molds the whole life and reveals its operations in all the forms of human activity, whether in individual or associated action, it

therefore also makes its mark in history. Here it is less defined than in individual experience and action, but not less certain. No sooner had the lapse of time after the death of Christ and the growth of the Christian church, afforded an opportunity for observing the forces which were operating than the influence of Christianity became manifest in various beneficent results, a thousand years and more before modern science was born.

To Christianity belongs the glory of leavening European society with a superior moral and spiritual element and destroying some of its worst customs.

It is perfectly obvious to every student of history that at the beginning of the Christian era, the more cultured and civilized European society was utterly corrupt, and that this corruption was attended and fostered by the prevalence of religious skepticism, and the most base and infamous moral principles; and that on the other hand, compared with all this, Christianity was sun-bright purity and moral power. This pure religion attacked this corrupt society, shamed it into a degree of reform, and drove its bad principles into obscurity, and filled their place with a purer influence, and in so doing it vastly modified the moral condition of society. This is confessed even by Gibbon, who ascribes in part the success of Chris-

tianity to its superior doctrines, and severer morals. For instance, sodomy was among the Greeks and Romans esteemed a virtue, and in that light descanted on by Socrates and Plato. The heathen temples then, as they are now, were always the abodes of scores or hundreds of women who were consecrated prostitutes, whose trade supplied the revenues of the temple.

We have a striking monument of the moral and religious energy inherent in the Christian supernaturalistic faith in the operations of modern Missions.

Think of the magnitude and multidude of these establishments, of the vast and steady outlay of capital which they involve, of the sublime object at which they aim, of the many truly sublime lives which they have developed, besides the hundreds of others who though less exalted have exhibited a principle of Christian love, wide as the world and strong enough to snap asunder the adamant chains that bind them to their homes and native lands; then think of the results which are already reached, civil, social, scientific, moral and religious, so great, so multifarious as to baffle description, except in historic detail: and finally consider that all this is only incipient, that these missions are yearly growing stronger and more numerous, that converted

native workers are multiplying in an increasing ratio, that the heathen communities in the midst of which these missions are stationed, are being gradually and surely leavened with Christian ideas, and accustomed to Christian practices, that as a consequence there is a wide and powerful fermentation among all classes, while the relative proofs and value of Christian doctrines are becoming the subjects of wide-spread discussion, and even "a nation is born at once" into the Christian faith as in the case of Madagascar. Such operations as these, and similar efforts for the debased and spiritually destitute home populations, are confined to those who believe in the supernaturalism of Christianity.

Where in all the world outside of this faith do we find an exhibition of moral and spiritual life and power at all approximating this in purity, breadth, effectiveness and steady endurance, and organized fixedness? The answer is—nowhere.

Of course, it is within the power of the unsympathetic to depreciate all this, and the lives of the great men and good men who have inaugurated and sustained these movements. But all such depreciation reflects unfavorably upon those who indulge it. It is too clearly similar in its origin to the low and unfavorable opinion that selfish, vicious and grov ling

dispositions always entertain respecting what is morally above them. It it but the brand of self-condemnation which justice affixes upon them. But wisdom is justified of her children.

The operation of supernaturalistic Christianity, which in our opinion is the only Christianity, is also seen in unparelled beauty and beneficence in forms of individual life and action. Take the case of Mr. Moffatt. He goes to a distant land, deprives himself of all the charms of civilized associations for a life among savages, not to become a savage like them, but preserving all the feelings and tastes of cultured society, and making sleepless endeavors to elevate the conceptions, and purify the morals of those savages, and to introduce among them the arts and tastes of civilized life. This is only a case of thousands; and it is exclusively a Christian phenomenon and development. It has been exemplified in its main features of self-denial for the good of others, for their moral and religious and social instruction and elevation by hundreds in their own country in every century and in every land where Christianity has come. It is to lives like these, the direct offspring of faith in Christian supernaturalism, that we are surely justified in ascribing the chief superiority of Europe or America to Cathay, and in

affirming that the chief reason why the difference is not greater is that in Christendom itself there are so few who fully and heartily embrace Christian principles.

That dark and wicked things have been done in the name of Christianity is nothing against it, as all acknowledge that those things are perversions of Christianity, either through ignorance or deliberate hypocrisy; and so they are done against Christianity and in spite of it, instead of flowing from it. They come of that native human wickedness which Christianity seeks to destroy.

The elevating influence of supernaturalistic Christianity would become further manifest by comparing its greatest characters, including its founder, with the greatest characters who have not known or recognized its claims and principles.

As a living example at home of the working of this supernaturalistic ideal and faith and experience, we may point to George Muller, of Bristol, England. His early life gave no signs of moral and spiritual genius. In moral worth he seemed not to be above the average of well-born persons. He charges himsel with meanness and falsehood and with low views and aims and pursuits. But giving himself in penitence and faith to Christ, he became the subject of

new powers and experiences, and from that time he has developed a new life, a life of the very noblest order. In moral and spiritual beauty and power this life has no compeer or rival among non-theistic men or natural Theists. This life is the direct product of Christian and supernaturalistic Theism as he has conceived and believed it. What then shall we say of its cause? Can the fruit of Theism and supernaturalism be better and the tree itself worse than atheism or naturalism? Can it be that the false faith is the best in its working and result? No; for this contradicts itself, since all thought and argument proceed on the contrary assumption.

I have mentioned Mr. Muller as only one of thousands, of equal or greater moral worth and usefulness, though there are few whose life and its fruits are so striking and definitely appreciable.

CHAPTER VII.

HINDRANCES.

We have seen in a previous chapter that in general it is only the lack of spiritual insight which obscures the moral glories of Christianity. But there are many forms and causes of this blindness and consequent obscuration of the Truth. We propose to cite some of these, and show more specifically why many wise men fail to discern and follow the Supreme Idea and repose their faith in Christ.

To analyze preversity is of no intrinsic advantage, and such employment is unattractive to any well-poised mind. But if by this means we can fasten more firmly the just charge of guilt, or guard a soul from danger, or lead a sinner to repentance, our ungracious and distasteful task returns us a compensation.

There are reasons or causes of skepticism which are personal and peculiar, and these cannot be given. There are others which are of a general na-

ture and pertinent to our theme, and so demand our attention.

Of these, one of the most prominent and conspicuous, or at least one of the most influential, is *Phariseeism*. The reader may be startled a little at this, as it seems quite novel in such a connection. If any of these savans should see this chapter, and if at the same time they cared anything for its author, it would stir them unpleasently to find themselves classed with those narrow and jealous old Jews whom we all despise and detest so heartily, and against whom even these savans would be arrayed in defense of Jesus—at least in modern times. In those times they would, no doubt, have been called Sadducees, had they been Jews. But both Sadducees and Pharisees had one quality in common, a quality which was most conspicuous in the latter, and which is always suggested by the term Pharisee. That quality is *moral conceit*. It was more obstrusive and more offensively proclaimed and emblazoned by the Pharisee than it is by the savan; but I suspect that in the latter it is more thoroughly woven into the texture of his self-estimates, and more completely free from conflict or annoyance from the profounder depths of the spirit or from any outer source. The modern is more homogeneous than

was the ancient Pharisee. He has no need like his ancient prototype, to offer prayers, or pay tithes, or give alms in order to keep up his good opinion of himself. His philosophy itself, like Rosseau's book of confessions, is sufficient proof of his moral worth.

This is in vital antagonism to one of the initial elements of the Christian Ideal, which demands repentance and self-renunciation. All who come to Christ must come as sinners, who renounce all claim on the ground of their own merit and look to Christ as the Lord our Righteousness. This is repulsive to these philosophical Pharisees. They do not wish to be "plucked" in this style. Why not leave to them their moral plumes, and allow them appropriately "to make a spread?"

Mr. H. is an indisputable proof of the truth of what I affirm. He declares that this was exactly the state of his own mind. While he thought it a benefit to most people to get converted, as they call it, and to become Christians and join the church, he wished to consider himself as above all need of the kind, as better without conversion than they with it. He confesses that to nothing in Christianity was he so vitally opposed as to the doctrine that he must be saved through the merits of another, and by the

mercy and grace of God; that as a condition of this he must confess inherent vileness, and that without divine mercy and grace he is helpless, lost, undone forever; and that he must virtually proclaim all this to the public, as Christ admits no disciples who are ashamed of him or his gospel, and will not confess him before men. This confession he has made before many witnesses, together with his former phariseeism and its happy termination by the grace of God.

Another cause of their wrong and fatal course is their intellectual pride. The very first class of minds have never shown any sign of this, not in this direction. But to men who do not attain that high rank, who can elaborate a theory, and make an imposing display of argumentation, added to a fertile invention, and fluent expression, the indulgence of a well-regulated conceit of superior intellect is a luxury which they cannot forego on any consideration. It is an enjoyment beyond all price. Have they not had the genius to discover what antiquates the Gospels, or at least the second genius to understand those who made this discovery; and shall they take the laurals from their own brows and trample on them by following a track which would ultimately lead them to the feet of Jesus? That is more than

can be expected. What were the use of their intellectual progress and achievements, if they are to stultify them like this?

Besides, is not their intellect their distinctive glory? and is not this the highest of all possible distinctions? Why then should they surrender it and its products by submitting to mechanical processes which will dim the light of thought and replace the triumphs of genius with the vagaries and symbols of superstition? They therefore fix their eye steadily on their theory, and refuse to see any excellence but that. The Christian Ideal is looked at with half-closed eyes, so that its glories look dimmer than the twilight. And suppose these were never so bright, this is only an ideal, a beautiful fiction, while their theory is science, philosophy, truth. It does not occur to them, nor in their state of mind can it occur to them, that it is no abrogation of their intelligence to admire a sublime ideal even if its objective reality may be doubtful; and that it is far nobler and far more worthy of high intelligence to strive after the moral realization of this ideal than to be content with an inferior reality. To them the joy of an inferior pride is better than the joy of a superior aspiration and hope and effort with the superior results which inevitably follow such a course. Thus

their intellectualy pride at once obscures and debases both their intelligence and their moral and spiritual character.

My friend H. is a confessed example of this also. He made no pretensions to great originality in philosophy, but he thought he could see into the foundations and causes of things far more profoundly and broadly than Christians do. He could explain all their marvels by natural causes. He could see and show the weaknesses of our defenses, weaknesses of which our incapacity is unobservant. He could in many striking particulars show the crudeness and incoherency of our views. Of course, this was quite an intellectual distinction. It were impossible to feel all that without a degree of elation, and without a temptation to make out his own elevation as clear and as great as possible. He will naturally be indisposed to see the sublime in Christianity. That would relatively dimish the lustre of his anti-Christian attainments and his pleasure in their contemplation. His own proud intellectual self and the prowess of his favorite infidel authors have become his ideal; and while this can be complacently maintained the Christian Ideal will shine in vain for him. In these frigid heights of a vain pride he dwelt for many years—till he saw his own idols gashed and

marred, and saw that some Christians know as much as he and his masters. He sees it all now and has no reserve in making the confession.

His song is now

> My all to Christ I've given,
> My talents, time and voice,
> Myself, my reputation,
> Jesus only is my choice,

It should be added, however, that he is as sharp as ever to detect a flaw in a Christian's argument, discriminating the poor argument from Christianity itself.

Another cause of the inefficacy of the Supreme Idea with many men of science is their subjection to the domination of sensible phenomena. The senses give the law to their imagination, and their imagination controls or rather constitutes their intellect and conscience. To them the highest processes and the highest ends are found in "the uses of the scientific imagination," which deals only in sensible phenomena and their relation to each other. Hence an idea which transcends all these appears to them dubious and dim, and it is devoid of power to charm and animate them. They will pronounce it mystical and trans-

cendental, or visionary and illusive, or a "pseudo-idea" which imposes on its subject, who erroneously thinks it a real and genuine conception. Our argument, of course, is nugatory to those who cannot discern the Supreme Idea and who consider our representation of it as an illusion. We wait till they receive their sight.

Closely allied with this, and one of its constituent elements, is the domination in their minds of the law of uniforminity or natural causation. This seems to preclude all supernatural interposition by rendering it apparently needless, and showing no place for it. Thus nature becomes the eternal all.

This is fostered by the spiritual apathy and disgust natural to our race, that state of mind which is described in the Scriptures as the carnal mind, which is averse to God. The remedy for this is within their reach, and they are responsible for its continuance and ruling operation. We may argue with them and pray for them; but only their own free act in seeking and submitting to the truth and grace of Christ can give them freedom from the slavery of their inferior conception and make them know the glory and power of the Supreme Idea and the reality of the experience which we have expounded.

The wrong bias and wilful turning away from the

truth was strikingly exemplified in the grandfather of the present Dr. Darwin, as seen in the following extract from the *Biographia Literaria*, of Coleridge: "Dr. Darwin possesses, perhaps, a greater range of knowledge than any other man in Europe, and is the most inventive of philosophical men. He thinks in a new train on all subjects but religion. He bantered me on the subject of religion. I heard all his arguments, and told him it was infinitely consoling to me, to find the arguments of so great a man, adduced against the existence of God and the evidences of revealed religion, were such as had startled me at the age of fifteen, but had become the objects of my smile at twenty. No new objection, not even an ingenious one. He boasted that he had never read one book in favor of such stuff, but that he had read all the works of infidels."—p. 628.

CHAPTER VIII.

HINDRANCES OVERCOME.

SCIENCE and philosophy are our natural Law and Gospel, and when not perverted must contribute to the highest efficiency of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, not merely by discovering new evidences of its divine authority, and exhibiting fresh illustrations of the perfection of the divine attributes, but also by correcting and regulating our specific judgments in the application of general principles.

Every age generates new difficulties on the subject of religion, and those who see these difficulties clearly, and who are also lacking in spiritual experience and perception, will be overcome by them, and Christianity will be rejected. This class must be met and answered purely on the foundation of science, and they must be shown that their own foundation does not support them. Till the foundations of their positive disbelief are destroyed or rendered doubtful at least, it is in vain to urge them to

a practical and vital trust in Christ for salvation. And if the Gospel is of God it has the same Author with nature and so cannot clash with nature; and hence those who reject the Gospel on the score of nature's teachings do it only because of their misapprehension of nature, and this misapprehension can be exposed by true science and philosophy, for these accord with facts; and all facts must accord with the Gospel of God, and so go against the rejecters of the Gospel. Conversely it holds true, that if science does not support, but opposes Christianity, then, Christianity is not true; so that we are always bound to show the harmony of science with revelation, or at least that they do not conflict. Every age therefore demands a class of philosophical divines who are well versed alike in the doctrines of the Gospel and in the scientific thought of the age, men who are able to show to tempted and doubting scientists that revelation has no legitimate foe in anything that science reveals, and that the claims of the Gospel on their credence are philosophical and just. Science can thus defend the Gospel in defending and unfolding itself.

But science is competent to do more. It can correct and instruct all, even Christians. Almost any man, however pious and however lofty in his moral

conceptions, would have thought it wrong two or three hundred years ago to say, that the sun is stationary and that the earth revolves around it, or to say, that the earth and seas were the scenes of teeming populations of animals myriads of years before Adam lived. It is on this side of the history of human progress that they are justified who say that this progress has not been moral but intellectual, that the change and progress in our notions of what is right or wrong has been the effect of intellectual progress. It is true, that the fundamental principles of morals remain the same as they were thousands of years ago and must remain the same forever, while our judgments of the right or wrong of this or that have radically changed in a countless host of particular cases, simply because of the advancement of scientific knowledge. Hence a perfect scientific culture is necessary to the developement of a perfect moral censor. In this way science is a universal social blessing and a rectifier of crude moral judgments, judgments which are based on misapprehension, and so both erroneous and injurious, and sometimes both unjust and cruel in their effects.

But when science has vindicated revelation against intellectual skepticism, and when it has rectified all our erroneous special judgments, it has not done

everything for us that our moral and spiritual nature requires for its proper developement and dignity.

After all this we may remain in a very low spiritual state, with small spiritual intuition or aspiration. We may live mostly or wholly in the low plane of a merely earthly life. We may believe only because we have seen or had evidences derived from without, so that while we are nominally Christians we are practically infidels. This is the condition of a large proportion of the so-called Christian world. They think the Bible must be true for various reasons which they can appreciate. But as to the special and peculiar and very lofty doctrines which it is alleged to teach, of the Deity of Christ, of a divine atonement, of the new birth or the renewal of the character by the Holy Spirit, in answer to the prayer of the believing penitent, and of plighted divine grace to live a holy life, walking with God in conscious and happy communion with Him, and that this is the immediate duty and constant privelege of all—there they stand in doubt and mental vacillation. They have little or no inner light or vision or faculty divine, by which they can directly discern that these and other such doctrines are of God and supremely glorious; and whether in the church or out, they are practically dead for religious

good, being without spiritual enthusiasm and earnestness and joy. All these want a power which the science or philosophy of the universe can never give. They want to be impregnated by the moral and spiritual energy of the Infinite, the Sun of Righteousness. The Spirit of God must make them the children of God, when they will be CHILDREN OF LIGHT and CHILDREN OF THE DAY, and *not of the night*, as they are now. This is to be made a conscious Christian, who knows the Truth and knows that he knows; and it is such a Christian that the psalmists, the prophets and the epistles describe as an acknowledged servant and child of God.

These may not be versed in the "evidences," so-called, and science may have disclosed to them few of its treasures, and many of them have read but little, except their own heart and the Bible, with a few pages and a few columns here and there as small opportunity, and perhaps small taste have prompted or allowed. Yet they *know whom they have believed*, and that he is able to keep that which they have committed to him until *that day*. They pin not their faith to any other man's sleeve, nor in any wise depend on the learning of others as a ground of their faith in the Bible as the book of God and in Christ as the Saviour of penitent sinners. As one of this class

recently said, which is what the class has always said, they are not moved by Tyndall's infidelity, nor would they be moved if all the world should disbelieve. They know by experience and the inner vision the truth they profess, and they need not that any man should teach them on this point. They do not believe without evidence, and their evidence is quite as scientific and philosophical as any that is generally so accounted, and of a higher order. Indeed, its philosophy is only doubted or denied because it outranks the capacity of the mere scientists and philosophers. Sir Wm. Hamilton said that the profound and original Arthur Collier was a high churchman, on grounds which high churchmen could not understand. It is thus that these Christians (and in fact all Christians) are Christians, on grounds, which transcending all natural power without the Spirit, surpasses the comprehension of anti-christian men of science.

It is a larger measure of sight or knowledge which the Church itself needs above all things. Very valuable are any contributions to the "evidences" as a check to skepticism on that subject; and every new fact that rectifies erroneous judgments is a very desirable acquisition; but these do not bring the dead to life nor give sight to the blind. They do

not necessarily bring the soul into affiliation with God, and disclose the moral splendors of the upper world, the spiritual realm, where the advanced spiritual nature lives and moves, and has its being. For this the grace of God is necessary, giving a new life. We want to be endued with power from on high; and, we repeat, the Church needs it in a larger measure. There are so many among us who know so little of this, that they serve as a cloud-wrapper around the more spiritual, and thus hide from the outside world, the better and holier light which the Church contains. The glory of the Lord needs to light upon us all, and burn into us that we may rise and shine.

It is the exercise and exhibition of this higher and holier light and power, which are necessary to convince and inspire, and animate the indifferent and languid multitude, composed of those who are not positive disbelievers in religion and Christianity, but who are earth-worms, though of various forms and habits and surbordinate appetites and tastes, who have no wings to rise into the upper and spiritual air, nor scarce a faculty to concieve any higher style of life and happiness than that they follow and enjoy. So far as possible they must be made to see it in living examples in the Church.

Yet these examples can be discovered and fully understood only by the aid of a divine revealer. An earnest waiting Church must effectively invoke the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit; as He only reveals the Father and the Son, and all the grand economy of spiritual truth and forces. He gives life and significance to the dark dead letter, turns history into providence, and nature into the universal hand-writing of a just and gracious, and merciful God. He is the ever-flaming lamp of the temple, and the celestial fire which burns on the alter, in which only the offered sacrifice is acceptable.

In the mean while no one is exempt from responsibility. No one is abandoned of God. To all He gives some degree of light and power, which, if properly used, will develope more. If they prefer to follow stronger, though inferior, inclinations, and to gaze only or chiefly on the more garish and vulgar lights, and to exalt them into supreme guides, they must bear the moral consequences. Their light must go out in total darkness, and the blackness of darkness forever must be their portion. On the other hand, if they follow faithfully their best light, however faint it be, and treat it according to its dignity, not according to its quantity and its

glare, it will surely become clearer and stronger till it floods the horizon with its glory. Unto him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath. Unto the light given ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

THE END.

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